



# SPACES, MOBILITIES AND YOUTH BIOGRAPHIES IN THE NEW SWEDEN

Studies on education governance and social inclusion and exclusion

JOAKIM LINDGREN

Department of Education

UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

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## Abstract

The main theme of this thesis is the relation between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. Overall the thesis is based on a life history approach where biographical interviews with young people are complemented with other contextual data such as survey data, longitudinal statistics, interviews with local politicians and school actors and local reports. Data were generated in three Swedish areas: a rural area in the North, an advantaged segregated area, and a disadvantaged segregated area in the South. The thesis consists of four articles that use the concepts of biography, space, and mobility. Article 1. examines the increasing usage of biographical registers in school. It suggests that biography as a form of education governance serves to construct the students as both objects for assessment and as a relay for continuous self-assessment. As such, this is a socio-political technology that is important to acknowledge in order to understand processes of social inclusion and exclusion. Article 2. addresses the following empirically generated question: How is it possible to understand the fact that disadvantaged students from a segregated area have such optimistic future orientations in relation to further education and work? Building on life history interviews with a small sample of refugee youth from a disadvantaged segregated area the paper presents a concept labelled Utopian diaspora biography (UDB). UDB describes a process whereby a high level of aspiration concerning education and labour is accumulated as a consequence of the social, temporal and spatial dynamic of the biography. Article 3. is an attempt to develop new understandings about local production of social inclusion and exclusion in a decentralised, individualised and segregated school landscape. Using a wide range of data the article suggests that local differences concerning schooling and the outcomes of schooling – both in terms of statistical patterns and the identities produced – are interrelated and are based on an amalgamation of local policy implementation, material conditions and spatially guided representations. Article 4. deploys the concept of mobility in order to explore how space and class become related to education and social inclusion and exclusion in the three chosen areas as young people are spatially situated but move, want to move, dream about moving, try to move, and fail to move through, in and out of different forms of communities. This paper shows that the possibilities of moving to desired places on the education- and labour market are unequally distributed between young people and between places. The analysis also seeks to move beyond schematic typologies such as those of ‘immobile working class’ and ‘mobile middle class’ by exploring how mobility is made meaningful and how notions about mobility are structured and enable action. In summary, the thesis contributes to the discussion on processes of inclusion and exclusion in contemporary society. These processes are understood as inter-disciplinary problematics that include the social production of spatiality, historicity, and sociality at both the societal level and on the level of identity. Crucial aspects concern aestheticisation and performativity in education which imply an increasing focus on discursive, or textual, dimensions of identity formation and the competitive strategies developed by students in order to secure social inclusion through the marketing of oneself. Under these circumstances, new identities and new forms of social inclusion and exclusion are produced.

**Keywords:** education governance, social exclusion, biography, space, mobility, performativity



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Swedish author Torgny Lindgren once got the question: ‘Is it fun to be a member of the Swedish Academy?’ (Dagens Nyheter 2004). Lindgren replied in this somewhat peculiar way:

*‘I can’t answer that question. Over time, everything becomes interwoven with life, to read, read, read, and to write a little bit. There is time to be a member of some committee or jury too. Nevertheless, the answer is no, and yes’ [translated from Swedish].*

As I recapitulate the work with this thesis, I think about Lindgren’s answer and I ask myself: Joakim, was it fun to write this thesis? And I reply:

*‘I can’t answer that question. I started out the work as a parent of a small child and a recently become house owner. Me and Pernilla spent days and nights rebuilding the old house. I stayed home on parental leave with my oldest child Elsa and with my youngest child Nils. At the same time, my father slowly grew ill. At work, I was teaching and participating in different activities. Over time, everything becomes interwoven with life. There is time to write a thesis too. Nevertheless, the answer is no, and yes’.*

In a sense, these awkward answers are ‘acknowledgements’ of a theory of Being that serve as a proper introduction to this thesis. It is a theory that acknowledges the organic, complex, and entangled nature of the human condition. It is also a theory informed by a ‘positive’ version of George Orwell’s ‘double think’: the act of simultaneously accepting as correct several mutually contradictory beliefs. It is a both/and also-theory.

However, the customary intention of acknowledgements is not to engage in philosophical discussions, it is to express one’s appreciation. Even though things do appear to float together in life, there were some people that I was dependent on during this time. In the following, I want to take the opportunity to thank them.

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Joakim Lindgren

Obbola, March 2009

# SAMMANFATTNING

I den här avhandlingen utforskas relationer mellan utbildning och socialt innanförskap och utanförskap. Undervisning och fostran har i alla tider syftat till att integrera individen i samhället genom att forma hennes språk, vanor, beteenden, idéer och moral samt genom att kvalificera henne för olika arbetsuppgifter. På så sätt använder varje samhälle utbildning som ett sätt att forma och styra människan i enlighet med de historiska och sociala villkor som råder.

Under större delen av 1900-talet, särskilt perioden efter andra världskriget, syftade utbildning i Sverige till att skapa social jämlikhet, demokrati och ekonomisk utveckling. Skapandet av en gemensam grundskola för alla barn och ungdomar samt en sammanhållen gymnasieskola är exempel på centralt styrda statliga reformer inom ramen för detta samhällsprojekt. Under denna period tog staten i ökande utsträckning på sig huvudansvaret för att integrera individen i samhället. Under slutet av 1980-talet inleddes en omstrukturering av utbildningspolitiken som syftade till att öka den ekonomiska effektiviteten och individens frihet. Decentralisering, avreglering, kommunalisering, mål- och resultatstyrning och individualisering sågs som effektiva reformer. Denna omstrukturering innebar bland annat en omfattande ansvarsförskjutning från staten till den lokala nivån och den enskilda individen. Som sådan var den kopplad till mer övergripande förändringar i det svenska samhället och den övriga västvärlden. Denna pågående process kan beskrivas som ett politiskt systemskifte.

I detta sammanhang har skolan kommit att inriktas mer och mer mot att forma en individ som kan hantera och ta det växande individuella ansvar som hon får i det moderna samhället. Det handlar att administrera, förvalta och förverkliga *sina egna* liv och drömmar: sina val, sin välfärd, utbildning, yrkeskarriär, sjukvård och pension. Denna självständiga, flexibla och kreativa individ styrs inte främst via centrala statliga direktiv och regler. Hon styrs i stället på avstånd – via hennes egen motivation och utifrån hennes personliga uppfattningar om vad som är bäst för just henne. Något förenklat kan man säga att, om skolan tidigare handlat om att eleven skulle bli *något*, så ska hon i dag bli *någon*. I avhandlingen studeras detta sätt att forma individen som uttryck för *ny pedagogisk styrning*.

Parallellt med dessa förändringar har sociala och ekonomiska skillnader mellan grupper i Sverige ökat. Det kanske tydligaste exemplet på detta är den tilltagande boendesegregationen som tenderar att följa med in i skolans

klassrum och sätta ramar för undervisnings- och fostransprocesser. Situationen i vissa utsatta storstadsområden är sådan att mindre än varannan elev lämnar grundskolan med behörighet för att läsa ett Nationellt program på gymnasienivå. Det finns områden där mer än en tredjedel av alla unga mellan 20 och 25 år varken arbetar eller studerar. I dessa områden lever i huvudsak människor som är födda utomlands eller som har föräldrar som är födda utomlands. Det är människor som generellt är fattigare, sjukare, mer trångbodda och som lever kortare än människor i övriga Sverige. Till viss del har den politiska omstruktureringen syftat till att hantera och bekämpa detta utanförskap. Kritiker å andra sidan, menar att omstruktureringen snarare förvärrat denna situation.

Mot bakgrund av denna typ av förändringar genomfördes vid millenieskiftet ett internationellt forskningsprojekt – Education Governance and social integration and exclusion (EGSIE) [Pedagogisk styrning och social integration och utanförskap]. I projektet användes två olika angreppssätt för att förstå relationer mellan pedagogisk styrning och innanförskap och utanförskap. Det första angreppssättet fokuserade på likvärdighet och i vilken utsträckning skolan förverkligar sitt uppdrag att skapa social integration. Här är handlade det bland annat om att kartlägga olika elevgruppers tillgång till utbildning på olika nivåer. Det andra angreppssättet var mindre konventionellt. Här handlade det om att analysera olika konsekvenser av den kunskap – de idéer, föreställningar, metoder och kategorier – som används i skolans omstrukturering. Till exempel riktades uppmärksamheten mot hur de ideal som skapas i skolan sätter gränser för vem som hamnar innanför och utanför. Utgångspunkten här var att möjligheten att leva upp till dessa ideal varierar eftersom barn och ungdomar kommer till skolan med olika förutsättningar.

För att kunna utforska relationer mellan pedagogisk styrning och socialt innanförskap och utanförskap utifrån dessa två angreppssätt studerades kommunala grundskolor i tre olika områden. Skogen är ett mindre samhälle i Norrlands glesbygd. Parken och Hagen är stadsdelar i en större stad. Parken är stadens rikaste stadsdel med högutbildade innevånare och låg arbetslöshet. Hagen är ett av Sveriges mest socialt, ekonomiskt och kulturellt segregerade bostadsområden. År 2000 besvarade elever i årskurs nio en enkät som innehöll frågor om social bakgrund, attityder till påståenden om skola, samhället, arbetsliv, utanförskap och hur de såg på sina egna möjligheter att lyckas. I projektet genomfördes också analyser av skolans styrdokument, analyser av statistik inom utbildningsområdet och till sist, intervjuer med ansvariga politiker och tjänstemän på nationell och lokal nivå samt representanter från olika yrkeskategorier i skolor i de valda områdena.

Projektet visade att utanförskapet i olika avseenden hade ökat över tid. Projektet kunde dock inte slå fast att omstruktureringen av skolan givit upphov till denna förändring. Snarare tycktes omstruktureringen skapa en acceptans för



en ökande utslagning och växande lokala skillnader. Politiker och skolaktörer pekade på att kraven på den enskilde ökat och att det fanns en växande grupp elever, särskilt de i utsatta områden med annan etnisk bakgrund, som var förlorare i den nya svenska skolan. Enkätstudien visade dock att eleverna i Hagen, i relation till elever i de andra områdena, var mycket positiva till sina egna chanser att lyckas i skolan och i arbetslivet. Över 70 procent av eleverna i Hagen menade till exempel att alla kan lyckas i skolan bara de arbetar hårt, medan bara knappt 30 procent ansåg detta i de två andra områdena.

I projektet utpekades ett behov av att fortsätta att studera relationer mellan pedagogisk styrning och innanförskap och utanförskap. Inte minst situationen i Hagen och den potentiella konflikten mellan unga människors framtidsdrömmar och framtida livsbanor framhölls som ett viktigt studieobjekt. Denna avhandling tar sin utgångspunkt i detta avslutade projekt. Avhandlingen är en så kallad sammanläggningsavhandling som består av en introduktion, fyra fristående artiklar och en avslutande diskussion. Ambitionen har varit att både bidra med ny kunskap och nya konceptuella vägar att nå ny kunskap.

Den första artikeln behandlar den kanske tydligaste formen av pedagogisk styrning i dagens skola: den kontinuerliga dokumentationen och utvärderingen av elevers sociala och kunskapsmässiga utveckling. I artikeln tecknas en historisk bakgrund till denna praktik och konsekvenser kopplade till innanförskap och utanförskap diskuteras också. Den övergripande slutsatsen är att denna praktik har två syften: (a) att skapa eleven som ett objekt för bedömning (eleven som text) och (b) att *i* eleven skapa ett relä för kontinuerlig självbedömning (elevens självreflexivitet och motivation).

Den andra artikeln syftar till att besvara frågan: Hur är det möjligt att förstå det faktum att ungdomar i det segregerade Hagen hade så ambitiösa framtidsdrömmar i relation till utbildning och arbete? Utifrån livshistoriska intervjuer med före detta elever från Hagen diskuteras den sociala, rumsliga och även historiska rörelse som kännetecknar de utopiska projekt som de intervjuade flyktingungdomarna och deras föräldrar strävar efter att förverkliga. Dessa projekt bidrar till att återskapa delvis orealistiska föreställningar om social rörlighet, men utmanar samtidigt strukturell diskriminering på utbildnings- och arbetsmarknaden genom att utforska möjligheten om ett annat liv.

Den tredje artikeln syftar till att besvara frågan: Hur är det möjligt att förstå lokala skillnader mellan skolors praktik och resultat – både i termer av statistiska mönster och i termer av de identiteter som skapas – i ett decentraliserat, individualiserat och segregerat skollandskap? I denna artikel uppmärksammas situationerna i Parken och Hagen. Analysen bygger på livshistoriska intervjuer med före detta elever, statistik och data från det avslutade EGSIE-projektet. Resultaten visar att utanförskapet, i termer av fallerande övergångar till gymnasieskola och högre utbildning samt arbetslöshet, var avsevärt högre i Hagen än i Parken. Analysen antyder vidare att det finns en relation mellan

detta mätbara utanförskap och de olika identiteter som skapas i de två skolorna. Till exempel beskrev före detta elever i Parken den ideala eleven på ett sätt som låg i linje med de ideal som politiker och skolaktörer gav uttryck för. Den ideala eleven i Hagen var mer begränsad och beskrevs i termer av traditionella förmågor som skötsamhet och ordningsamhet. En tänkbar slutsats är att elever i Hagen är utsatta för en dubbel diskvalificering: dels en formell diskvalificering som utesluter dem från vidare utbildning, dels en informell diskvalificering som handlar om hur de i skolan formats som människor och blivande arbetstagare.

Den fjärde artikeln utforskar relationer mellan utbildning och innanförskap och utanförskap som en fråga om social och geografisk rörlighet. Genom att förhålla sig till olika former av mobilitet öppnar artikeln ett delvis nytt pedagogiskt forskningsområde. Artikeln bygger på enkätdata, statistik och livshistoriska intervjuer med före detta elever. I artikeln studeras hur lokala förhållanden i Skogen, Parken och Hagen inverkar på unga människors föreställningar om rörlighet och hur de faktiskt rör sig socialt och geografiskt. Analysen visar bland annat att unga i Hagen generellt är mer låsta till sin sociala och geografiska plats. Informanterna från Hagen verkar också vara mindre medvetna om det symboliska värdet som rörlighet har i dagens samhälle. Trots att de har omfattande erfarenhet av mobilitet tycks de inte införliva och dra nytta av dessa erfarenheter i skapandet av den egna identiteten. Detta kan bland annat bero på att deras erfarenheter av mobilitet inte tillmätts något värde i det omgivande samhället.

I den avslutande diskussionen kopplas de fyra artiklarna ihop med varandra. Här beskrivs hur utbildning i växande utsträckning kommit att präglas av *estetisering*. Denna förändring tar sig bland annat uttryck i en ökande dokumentation och utvärdering som i sin tur frammanar nya strategier och nya former av utanförskap. För att kunna bli bedömd som en lyckad elev måste eleven visa upp vissa kompetenser och beteenden. Denna skolpraktik kan ses som en förberedelse för en avreglerad arbetsmarknad som ställer nya krav på individer att dokumentera, kommunicera eller 'sälja' sig själv som arbetstagare. En central fråga gäller hur ett ökande fokus på identitetsformering i skolan gynnar respektive missgynnar elever i olika skolor och med olika bakgrund. De preliminära slutsatser som presenteras tyder på att skolsegregation kan ha betydelse i detta hänseende. Detta kan delvis bero på att de lokala villkoren tenderar att omöjliggöra att skolan arbetar mot de nationella målen. Det kan dock också bero på att skolan, i linje med idéer om lokal och individuell anpassning, justerar förväntningar och krav på ett sätt som hotar likvärdigheten. Det krävs mer forskning för att belysa denna typ av relationer mellan utbildning och innanförskap och utanförskap.

En annan fråga gäller den möjliga relationen mellan den ökande dokumentationen och utvärderingen i skolan och den typ av drivkrafter som

präglar de utopiska livsprojekten i Hagen. Kan det till exempel vara så att den svenska skolan i dag tvingas kompensera för en avtagande tro på utbildning och utveckling i samhället genom att skapa individuella, framåtsyftande och motiverande 'berättelser' som grupper av flyktingungdomar bär med sig tack vare sina biografiska erfarenheter?

Avhandlingen avslutas med förslag på fortsatt forskning. Bland annat påtalas behovet att metodologiskt komplettera studier liknande den aktuella med klassrumsobservationer.



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# INTRODUCTION

This is a compilation thesis consisting of a 'kappa' and four articles. In the 'kappa' I discuss my research approach and the preparation of the articles. The 'kappa' also includes a final discussion where I relate the articles to each other and to the overall purpose of the thesis.

In the following introducing section, I provide a short background to current debates on education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. I also introduce the international project 'Education governance and social integration and exclusion' (1998-2000) which was the starting point for my work. Finally, I present the purpose and research questions of this thesis.

## Current debates

Narratives of change often imply distinctions between past and present in terms of 'system shifts' or through dualisms as in 'from old to new'. Even though such images tend to present over-simplified understandings it is incontestable that the Swedish education system underwent radical changes during recent decades. From the late 1980s de-regulation, privatisation, decentralisation, managerialism, individualisation, school autonomy, freedom of choice, evaluation, assessment, competition, and goal and result steering have been seen as effective strategies to produce participation and access to educational fields and, eventually, the labour market (Arnesen & Lundahl 2006; Ball, Goodson & Maguire 2007; Daun 2007; Lindblad et al 2002). This amalgamation of ideas and practices involved new ways of governing education embedded in the ongoing restructuring, or 'modernisation', of the Swedish welfare state. This process finds its legitimisation in the critique of a paternalistic and ineffective welfare model: the old Sweden. Modernisation serves to find new solutions to a range of deep-seated social problems by creating an alternative to the state and the market. Following international patterns, it involves the usage of market solutions accompanied by a will to reshape civil society through emphasis on social cohesion, citizenship, democratic renewal, and social inclusion. Educational policy change is thus located in broader patterns of global and national economic, cultural, and social transformation.

In the context of modernisation, social exclusion has become one of the most important socio-political questions. Social exclusion, it is argued, may result in negative societal and individual consequences such as anomie, social chaos, riots, violence, drug abuse, and health problems (Sernhede 2009). Within the educational arena, the relationship of state policy and social

inclusion and exclusion is both a matter of producing democratic participation and a workforce deemed appropriate to international competition.

Social inclusion and exclusion are not fixed concepts. On the contrary, their boundaries move and are redesigned within different contexts. Some have argued that these twin concepts are discursive tools used in the transformation of governing (Hall 2005). The language of social exclusion has provided new ways of understanding and tackling poverty and social inequality. Historically such problems have been explained in terms of structural injustice based on socio-economic class. Consequently, Swedish policies have traditionally countered this explanation through a redistributive tax and benefit system.

The multi-dimensional concept of social exclusion departs from this perspective by also focusing on individuals and their lack of work, education, opportunities, engagement, and responsibility. It also identifies the role and activities of the communities where social exclusion is located. Policy ideas on 'participation', 'empowerment', 'self-determination', and 'community development' see the individual's capacities as the locus of change. These ideas can be found in policies and programs of both socialist and non-socialist governments during the last decades (Dahlstedt 1998; 2006; 2009).<sup>i</sup>

Despite the positive and humanistic contents of policies on social exclusion, some researchers have criticised the usage of the concept. This criticism has been particularly vocal in Great Britain where the concept made its political career first in the policies of Tony Blair's Third way. For example, it has been argued that the language of social exclusion created a new distinction between 'the socially excluded' and mainstream society. Critics have argued that this discourse is based on an embellish notion of a society where all citizens contribute to, and participate in, the social whole on a functional basis. It thus describes a society characterised by social cohesion beyond social antagonism based on social class and social inequality (Goodwin 1996; Levitas 1996; 1998; Lister 1998; Morrison 2003). Moreover, it has been argued that social exclusion concepts obscure inequalities *between* paid workers (the included) and that it devalues the unpaid work principally done by women (Levitas 1996). Levitas (1996 p. 19) has offered a contrasting image of the society where

*'[t]he "real" society is not that constituted by the (unequal) 70 percent, to which the poor are marginal or from which they are excluded. The real society is that made up by the whole 100 percent, in which poverty is endemic.'*

By neglecting such structural explanations – how wider social and economic forces produce inequalities – the language of exclusion has been accused of individualising social problems and blaming the socially excluded (Newman 2001; Lister 1998; Rose 2000).

The most common way of perceiving relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion is to evaluate processes through



which access and participation occurs (Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg 1999). As a part of modernist ambitions of post-World War welfare states, the positive aspect of education policy have the intention of eliminating exclusion by replacing it with inclusion. Focus is often on forms of exclusion or inequality based on class, gender, ethnicity, or disability. This perspective has been termed the *equity problematic* which:

*'focuses on the means by which activities are controlled or directed to deliver an acceptable range of outcomes in accordance with some established standards. This has been central to the politics of representation of access of individuals and groups that have been denied full participation in educational and social fields. The problem of governing in this respect is the administrative practices that limit or promote social, cultural or economic access or integration of these individuals and groups. Thus, a central problem of social inclusion/exclusion is a problem of representation: to what extent do individuals or groups with certain characteristics have access to educational measures? What practices produce or eliminate exclusion of these individuals and groups?'* (Lindblad et al 2002 p. 239).

This is a tradition in policy and research. It is based on the production of 'expectations and entitlements of individuals who act as agents of their own interests' (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001d p. 19). It is thus based on a priori identification of the actor who enacts cultural interests. Furthermore, this mode of thinking, acting and understanding the outcomes of schooling sees inclusion and exclusion as separate entities. Thus, effective and correct policies are assumed to produce inclusion and eliminate exclusion.

There is huge body of statistical information on the outcomes of schooling in this respect. For example it is well-known that the percentage of pupils leaving compulsory school without a certificate making them eligible for a National program at the upper secondary level has increased since the introduction of the new grading system in 1998 (National Agency of Education 2009a). That year 91, 4 percentage of all students were eligible, whereas only 88, 8 percentage of all students were eligible in 2009 (89, 9% of girls and 87, 6% of boys) (National agency of education 2009b). Differences between groups of students with respect to social background (especially parent's educational background) have also increased over the same period (National Agency of Education 2009a).

Local differences between schools have also grown since the early 1990s (National Agency of Education 2009a). Schools with poor results are most often situated in segregated areas in the larger cities. These so-called 'areas of social exclusion' include schools where less than 50 percent of compulsory school pupils become eligible for a National program, where more than one

third of all young people in the age between 20-25 neither work nor attend any educational institution, and where less than 40 percent of the population (between 20-64 years old) is gainfully employed (The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs 2008). In general, the inhabitants of these areas are immigrants or second-generation immigrants. They are often poor, unemployed, sick, and live in cramped and shabby quarters. Equally, these conditions seem to extend to the local schools, also affecting their outcomes. This version of the New Sweden – a segregated and unequal landscape – evolved during the recession of the 1990s.

Despite large-scale interventions in the form of state educational planning and national and local projects, cycles of injustice and poverty have not been altered over time. Beach and Dovemark (2007) have studied the outcomes of recent education policies addressing how modes of organisation and ideology have affected participation and the allocation of societal values. Their conclusion is that:

*'[a]ll the present research in Sweden related to education attainment in education markets suggests that the children of educationally and economically rich parents with high levels of social and cultural capital still tend to get educations (sic) that give better qualifications and future prospects than do the children of the educationally and economically poor parents (...). It is a further characteristic of the contradictions of an education system that claims to serve all fractions of society equally regardless of social inheritance but does not' (Beach & Dovemark 2007 p. 165).<sup>ii</sup>*

A complementary way of understanding relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion is to de-construct the ideas, policies, practices, categories, and methods that make up the seemingly natural groundwork of the equity problematic. Lindblad and Popkewitz (cf. 1999; 2000; 2001a, b, c) has termed this strand of research the *knowledge problematic*. The question here is not about social and economic access, but about 'what subjectivities are to be produced so that individuals can participate and act in productive ways' (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001c p. 26)?

*In asking this question, there is a recognition that schooling not only provides the procedural access for social participation but that it is about the types of individuality that are possible in society. It is here, at this point of normalizing particular types of people, that we can begin to think of a different way in which inclusion and exclusion can be considered (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001c p. 26).*

This problematic differs from the equity problematic in that it 'focus on the rules and standards of reason that "make" the actor who is represented in the

equity problematic' (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001d p 22). The concern is on the systems of reason that organise, or govern education policies and how these systems embody values, images, and narratives that function to qualify and disqualify individuals for action (Popkewitz & Lindblad 2000; Popkewitz 2001).

Below I provide an example of how one might approach policies on social exclusion using these alternative lenses. Inserted is an extract from a private member's bill introduced by one of the conservative parties that focuses on the modernisation of policies on integration.

*'Empowerment is the concept that summarises the fundamental idea of our striving for a freer and fairer society. The aim and intention of Social democratic politics has been to arrange the lives of citizens. Rules and institutions were developed giving much power to politically controlled apparatuses, which could steer many of the most important life choices of citizens. This was particularly true for the most exposed groups, which frequently have been reduced to powerless and protected clients. The growth politics we propose is based on the opposite principle, the principle of citizens' self-determination and empowerment. The aim and intention of this politics is to facilitate the development of such power by supplying tools and by opening possibilities that strengthen the freedom of citizens. As long as the "take-care-of-model" and its mentality continue to prevail in the Swedish society, we will not see any improvement regarding the politics of integration. Nothing will change unless individuals themselves and their civic communities are given practical opportunities to act, take initiatives, realise their own dreams, and work to meet their own needs. Integration will not be implemented as long as those people who are expected to be integrated in society are not allowed to speak and act for themselves. (...) [T]he motto "You shall decide" [is therefore] as relevant for a successful struggle against social exclusion as for a generally good social life' (Private member's bill 2005, translated from Swedish).*

This typical example links together humanistic, liberal, and progressive ideas about individual freedom. It is based on 'topoi', seemingly accepted, universal, and natural truths or 'commonplaces'. However, these ideas are embedded in a certain argumentative scheme. The aim, or telos, of this policy discourse is the creation of a particular form of individual who can realise and produce the new and desired relations between state and individual. This ideal subject is a self-responsible and self-governed individual who seeks opportunities for herself. Her form of individuality is linked to the new ways individuals are to be governed, i.e. through their own capacities.

The paradox is that this teleological discourse 'presupposes a set of outcomes that are already inscribed in the process it postulates' (Dean 2007 p. 69).

According to Dahlgren and Hultqvist (1995), this paradox was a common feature of the social policies of the 1980s. Drawing on the sociological narrative of individualisation, these policies described a new form of individuality, with new acquired capacities (Dahlgren & Hultqvist 1995). Ideas about political decentralisation and individual responsibility were implemented with reference to this new individual. At the same time, the responsibilities of the welfare state could be reduced by the same degree (Dahlgren & Hultqvist 1995). Nevertheless, these new and imagined individual capacities are not universally distributed. Hence, this policy framework excludes people from the outset – through its restrictive definition of the capacities that enable participation and access.

This relation between new forms of government and the constructions of subjects and subjectivities have been identified as a function of knowledge and power in terms of governmentality (Burchell, Gordon & Miller 1991; Dean 2010; Rose 1999). As a knowledge problematic, Dean suggests that:

*'[g]overnment concerns not only practices of government but also practices of the self. To analyse government is to analyse those processes that try to shape, sculpt, mobilise and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups (...). One of the points that is most interesting about this approach is the way it provides a language and a framework for thinking about the linkages between questions of government, authority and politics, and questions of identity, self and person' (Dean 2010 p. 12-13).*

Such governing processes, or services, are organised and supplied by various institutions in the welfare state and individual social inclusion is only realisable through active participation in their resources. People thus have to learn to interact and organise their lives correspondingly. The knowledge problematic thus implies that the dyad of government and education embraces particular social technologies, which are not limited by the framework of the education system created as part of the welfare state. One might say that this is an example of how *education belongs to our culture*.

Popkewitz (2007) has emphasised that the person inhabiting this policy discourse is a person who is *made* through the institutions of schooling and pedagogy. The official educational discourse *is* designed and expected to construct in students 'a particular moral disposition, motivation and aspiration' (Bernstein 2000 p 65). Olson's (2008) analysis of Swedish education policy and citizenship provides valuable insights on the changing telos of schooling in this respect. Olson shows how citizen upbringing, as revealed in education policies, has shifted over time to meet the demands of social and cultural change. From the post-war era until the late 1980s a society-centered and nation-oriented

citizenship discourse emphasised the role of the pupil as the future ‘co-builder’. Education was seen as a common and public good and the future citizen belonged to a ‘we’ who worked together in order to realise social change. In line with the overall education policy change, this discourse was replaced by a consumer-oriented citizen discourse in the early 1990s. The new citizen was both a ‘customer’ and ‘navigator’ who, stripped from societal duties, strived to design her own life choosing among the alternatives provided on the evolving market stalls. In the later 1990s, this individualised citizenship discourse became stronger. Drawing on the work of Zygmunt Bauman, Olson describes the new citizen as a ‘tourist’ and a ‘vagabond’, i.e. as an increasingly mobile, self-determinate and self-realising individual who, liberated from paternalistic state intervention, can profit from opportunities available in a deregulated (and global) labour market. Using the words of Popkewitz (2000 p. 167; cf. Frykman 1998), one might say that this policy change signified a ‘shift from governing practices related to the formation of collective social projects to contemporary projects that focus on cultural identities’.

In a sense, this aspect of schooling – as the construction of a specific identity – involved processes of social inclusion and exclusion that were more subtle and complex than patterns related to access or participation (Bernstein 1975; 2000; Dahlgren & Hultqvist 1995). For example, it is always difficult to measure and evaluate personal capacities like creativity, responsibility, self-determination, and motivation. Beach and Dovemark (2007) have studied the concrete implications of policy changes focused on identity formation in school (cf. Dovemark 2004; Lundahl 2001; Zackari 2001). Their ethnographical study of classroom practices re-tells the story of how certain groups of pupils (middle class-pupils foremost) were able to employ the resources of schools to their advantage while others were not. They also draw attention to how students were encouraged to put themselves and their ‘inner’ capabilities on display – to act out or even perform strategically in the classroom in order to render external evaluation possible and to secure individual success (Beach & Dovemark 2007).

In this context, educational research on new learner identities provides important insights (Andreasson 2007; Granath 2008; Krejsler 2009; Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001a; Vallberg Roth & Månsson 2008; Österlind 1998). These studies, that one might call studies of *knowledge* rather than *equity*, show how development interviews, individual education plans, logbooks, and portfolios reduce governance to rules of conduct. Such practices structure the field of possible action by rendering conduct calculable in terms of performance and subjectification. They aim at the level of individual reflection in order to produce and form the desired student identity. They aim to reshape and refashion pupils into future citizens who will participate in society as active and responsible individuals. Yet, by the same mechanism – an increasingly fine meshed net of social control – they simultaneously define the excluded pupil.

This is a crucial aspect of the knowledge problematic, i.e. that social inclusion and exclusion are mutually conceived in terms of each other (as inclusion/exclusion rather than inclusion *and* exclusion). Inclusion is thus considered as a 'practice that makes sense only against the background of something simultaneously excluded' (Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg 1999 p. 19). The net result is that the evolution of more inclusive educational practices might produce exclusion as well as inclusion.

Although schooling has an important role in shaping young people's identities, it is reasonable to assume that these identities also are formed outside school: in the family, among peers or through other forms of cultural mediation. In that sense, processes of education governance in school are not all embracing and they do not answer to a single causal principle. However, in some way or another, young people's reflexivity and imagination are exposed to processes of schooling. Schooling might be a prerequisite of realising dreams or it might in fact shatter such hopes. As pointed out by Lindblad and Popkewitz (2001a) it is a task for young people to qualify themselves for participation on the labour market by means of such education. This process is not a new phenomenon per se, but the declining ability of employing organisations to offer long-term employment has most likely increased the current emphasis on academic credentialing. In the light of social change and educational restructuring, this task has also become increasingly individualised.

To conclude: relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion have been studied from different perspectives and with different foci. At one end of the continuum, such relations are mapped out in the form of statistical patterns of access and participation while, at the other end, and with less frequency – they have been analysed as operating in the capillaries of biographical individual self-reflection.

However, few educational studies have tried to incorporate both ends of this spectrum, i.e. to study education governance and social inclusion and exclusion as *both a problem of equity and a problem of knowledge*. Overall, there are few empirical studies that have studied policy change as lived reality. Instead, most policy research remains at the level of 'abstraction' (Ball 2007). This thesis is an attempt to address these absences. In the next section, I will introduce the starting point for this work.

## The EGSIE-project as starting point

During the autumn in 1999 I was approached by Professor Lisbeth Lundahl who was involved in an international project called Education governance and social integration and exclusion (EGSIE). At the time, I had just finished my master thesis and was teaching part time at the department of Education at Umeå University. Lisbeth wondered if I wanted to conduct one of the Swedish

sub studies in the project: a questionnaire study directed to pupils in the ninth grade of compulsory school. I was happy to join the project and during the spring 2000, I carried out the survey and wrote a report. The report was entitled 'Between welfare and institutionally fabricated exclusion' (Lindgren 2003) and was eventually published in Rinne et al (2003) *Adolescent facing the educational politics of the 21th century. Comparative survey on five national cases and three welfare models*.

The EGSIE-project included research teams from ten countries inside and outside the European Union. A number of research studies were completed:

- National case studies dealing with education restructuring (Lindblad & Popkewitz 1999)
- A research review (Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg 1999; Popkewitz & Lindblad 2000)
- An analysis of policy texts (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2000)
- Interviews with national and local politicians and administrators and with school actors (e.g. teachers, head-teachers and school nurses) in different settings (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001b)
- A reanalysis of national and international statistics as systems of reason (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001a)
- Surveys directed to students during their last year of compulsory school in different settings (Rinne et al 2003)
- A concluding analysis focusing on theoretical questions and transitions in education governance (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001d)
- A final report to the European commission (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001c)

It is not possible to summarise the entire EGSIE-project here. Instead, I will present the basic ideas behind the project and focus on some of the Swedish results that had implications for my own work.

The project explicitly recognised a need to rethink education governance and social inclusion and exclusion as an object of study. Its ambition was thus to design the studies around both an equity problematic and a knowledge problematic (Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg 1999). A combination of these two problematics was regarded as a 'relational question of fields of interaction' and not merely 'an additive problem of doing a little of one (equity) and a little of the other (discursive analysis)' (Ibid p. 62-63).

The Swedish research team focused on three geographical areas with different structural conditions: A rural context in the remote parts of northern Sweden (described as 'North' in the reports) and two segregated areas in a large city: 'Garden', a poor and ethnically segregated community and 'Park', the



wealthiest area in the city and an example of privileged social and economical segregation.

### Research questions and results

The project was guided by three sets of questions. The first set, *Construction of narratives*, identified and analysed imaginaries related to the transition or restructuring of education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. This analysis showed that policies and politicians conceived education as important for social progress and for the development of both national economy and individual life quality. School actors, however, were more pessimistic. Largely, they had abandoned the conviction that the education system had the potential to contribute to the social inclusion of all students. Instead, they had started to focus more on the development and formation of student identities. This mode of individualisation was reflected in the increasing use of study plans where the curriculum was adapted to the needs of students. Moreover, school actors argued that the new and tougher demands of politicians and policy makers contributed to social exclusion (Lindblad et al 2002; Zackari 2001).

Students on the other hand, had a rather positive picture of equality in school. Overall, the survey data indicated that attitudes differed more between pupils from different areas, than between boys and girls or between pupils from different social classes. Young people from Garden, i.e. those who were the most economically and socially disadvantaged, were the most positive towards education, to the integrative potential of education and to their own possibilities for succeeding at school (Lindblad et al. 2002, Lindgren 2003). This was an unexpected result. Normally processes of social and cultural reproduction work to produce a habitus that corresponds to the objective structural conditions. It orients and directs individuals to their designated places in capitalist production (Bourdieu 1977). Somehow, the situation in the segregated Garden did not follow this general sociological assumption.

The second set of questions, *Construction of subjects*, served to explore the social construction of identities and individuals in school. The analysis showed that policy documents and school actors viewed the ideal school subject as independent, responsible, committed, self-reliant, and capable of taking initiatives, someone learning and adjusting to the new needs of the contemporary society. The school actors identified the 'losers' as those who did not fit this description. Immigrant students were one category of student labelled at risk whereas student's socio-economic background was not discussed in relation to social exclusion (Zackari 2001, Lindblad et al 2002). Overall, the general agreement was that the new reforms generated new demands on students. In general, students ranked traditional capacities such as 'Diligence and conscientious working', 'Positive attitude' and 'Own abilities and talents' as the most important properties for school success. 'Educated parents', the single



most important factor according to educational research, scored very low in their influence on school success.

The final set of questions, *Construction of governance*, served to link the previous sets of questions together. The project showed that increased social exclusion and decreased economic support for education were concurrent in the process of education restructuring. Governance was exercised in the form of organisational decentralisation plus the introduction of new management procedures, assessments, and resource regulations. However, the project could not claim that education restructuring actually produced increased social exclusion. Rather, it showed that restructuring created possibilities for economic cuts. Restructuring also took place alongside the acceptance of increased social exclusion and decreased equivalence between schools and regions in Sweden. A broad consensus on the need to modernise was described in terms of a 'new' hegemony 'with a focus on efficiency and individual agency and with silence concerning those who do not fit into such a system' (Lindblad et al 2002 p. 300).

Overall, the project pointed out a need for continued exploration of the processes of education governance and social inclusion and exclusion.

*A major conclusion in terms of education policy making is the need to problematize current stories of educational progress. There is a need for more reflexive and intellectual understanding of changes in education governance and the systems of reason that are used for educational changes as well as for social inclusion and exclusion of youth' (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001c p. 2).*

In the Swedish context, the youth study raised questions about how different groups of youth made sense of the relation between education and social inclusion and exclusion. Of particular interest was clarification of the strong belief in the equality of life chances expressed by Garden students. Such a belief:

*'appears to be an aspect of the regional educational landscape of Sweden that remains to be investigated, i.e. the interplay between identity and social inclusion and exclusion among adolescents in new educational environments like Garden' (Lindblad et al 2002 p. 301).*

Our overall conclusion was that the education culture in Sweden was in transition, something that had arisen from the parallel restructuring. We argued that we had found:

*'a change in hegemony with little argument and few if any alternatives. This transition, however, is not unequivocal. There are doubts and disorders as well as silences. This is combined with considerable loyalty to education*

*among students, who are the most distant from the dominating culture, students who also strongly support the dominant ideas about individual agency and a prosperous future. Such a conclusion can be used to further studies on relations between education restructuring and new patterns of governing (...), based on techniques of the self that can be regarded as increasingly vital for social inclusion and for the New Sweden' (Lindblad et al 2002 p. 301).*

## The study's purpose

In the light of these circumstances, the overarching purpose of the investigation described in this thesis was to continue to explore relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. In this work, I used the basic conceptual framework of the finalised EGSIE-project as a referential backdrop and I also drew on data generated in the project. However, this doctoral project was not a conventional follow-up study. On the contrary, I was free to develop and depart from the design of the original project.

I used the notion of *exploration* to denote an open and unpredictable research process guided by a purpose, but impossible to define in advance. My main interest remained the young informants in the three areas highlighted in the finished EGSIE-project. They went to compulsory school during the 1990s, a decade marked by economic recession and changes in the governing of the welfare state and the education system. For them social inclusion centered on their dreams about further education and work. Therefore, I sought to find ways to understand how these dreams had been formed, realised, corrected, or crushed and how their formal education had intersected with this process. I also explored how local conditions and biographical experiences were linked to this process.

I worked with two research questions. The first question was connected to the empirical results of the EGSIE youth survey:

1. How is it possible to understand the fact that disadvantaged students from a segregated area have such optimistic future orientations in relation to further education and work? This question served to explore beliefs in the school as given definition through the problematic of equity.

The second question sought to provide new insights on local processes of social inclusion and exclusion that had been discerned in the EGSIE-project:

2. How is it possible to understand local differences concerning schooling and outcomes of schooling – both in terms of statistical patterns and in terms of the identities produced – in a decentralised, individualised, and segregated school landscape?

This question contained the perspectives of both the equity problematic and the knowledge problematic.

The work to address the overarching purpose and the research questions has been reported in four articles. The first article, entitled 'Biography as education governance' (Lindgren 2007), outlined a frame of reference for processes of identity formation in contemporary Swedish schooling. In the second article, 'Diaspora biographies balancing ideology and utopia – On future orientations of immigrant youth in a segregated Sweden' (Lindgren 2010a), I drew on biographical interviews with informants from the segregated area Garden in order to address the first research question. In 'Spaces of social inclusion and exclusion. A spatial approach to education restructuring and identity in Sweden' (Lindgren 2010b), I used a broad range of data including biographical interviews, longitudinal statistics and interviews with school actors and local politicians. This article addressed the second research question. Finally I also explored how the mobilities of these young people were related to education and social inclusion and exclusion as they were spatially situated but, physically and metaphorically, moved, wanted to move, dreamed about moving, tried to move and failed to move through, in and out of different forms of communities (cf. Gulson & Symes 2007 p. 2). 'Mobilities of Youth – Social and spatial Trajectories in a Segregated Sweden' (Lindgren & Lundahl 2010), based on biographical interviews and statistical data, links education governance to social segregation and the imagined and real mobilities of the informants.

Overall, the research questions brought together different empirical, theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues. They guided a search for both knowledge and ways to generate knowledge. At the most basic level the point of my work was not to find objective truth, but rather to 'keep the conversation going' (Rorty 1980 p. 377). I aimed at identifying new problematics that exposed more reflexive, intellectual understandings of the relation between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. To some extent, the results of this aim are invisible in the finalised articles. Thus, in the following section, I try to make them transparent.

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<sup>i</sup> Within this thesis social exclusion is loosely defined according to the political discourse and to the empirical definition provided by survey data and interview data. Social exclusion, according to this definition, is related foremost to unemployment, but also to poverty and dependence on social welfare. Of course, this does not mean that social exclusion may not take other forms. For example, studies have showed that unemployment may operate in favour of social inclusion, by increasing individuals' social relations and networks (Gallie 1999).

<sup>ii</sup> Such patterns of social reproduction in education have been identified both in Sweden and internationally. (For Swedish studies see for example Arnman et al 1993; Beach 2001; Broady & Börjesson 2002; Bunar 2001; 2009; Bunar & Kallstenius 2007; Dryler

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1998; Dovemark 2004; Lidegran 2009; Palme 2008; Sawyer 2006; Trondman & Bunar 2001. For international studies see for example Apple 1982; Ball, Maguire & Macrae 2000; Bourdieu & Passeron 1990; Collins 2009; Demaine 2001; Fitz, Davies & Evans 2006; Halsey et al 1997; Lemke 2002; Olssen 2004, Van Galen & Dempsey 2009).

# RESEARCH APPROACH

In this section, I describe my overall research approach and I elaborate on the concepts drawn upon. I also discuss my methods and the production of data. Finally, I reflect on ethical aspects of my investigation.

## Pragmatic and eclectic

In order to explore the overlapping practices of policy change, schooling, social inclusion/exclusion, identity, locality, and mobility I combined different research areas into interdisciplinary problematics. The notion of a 'problematic' refers to 'a set of problems to be investigated, held together by a network of beliefs' (Peters & Burbules 2004 p. 60). This notion recognises that problems are never really solved, but that the organisation of different problems may yield new fields with greater explanatory potential (Johnson 1980). Like Miller (1998 p. 188) I suggest that,

*'in the present the social sciences would benefit considerably from any theory that managed to clarify connections between features of our world that too often seem like isolated fragments whose simultaneous existence is no more than fortuitous'.*

In relation to the purpose of this study, I suggest that problems related to youth and social inclusion and exclusion cannot and should not focus only on education (or any other specific area alone). They need to be studied in an interdisciplinary manner, something that Bendit & Hahn-Bleibtreu (2008 p. 360) describes as 'a coordinated, integral and integrated way'. I therefore tried to bring this educational study into contact with broader scholarship. Consequently, I made some unconventional connections between different research areas, disciplines, theories, and methods.<sup>iii</sup> One might thus think of my research approach as pragmatic and eclectic (Ball 2007; Delamont & Atkinson 1995; Popkewitz 1998).

I have also used the notion of problematic in order to reflect on implications of the social epistemology of educational research and practice. As argued by Popkewitz & Lindblad (2000 p. 6, cf. Popkewitz 1996; 1997)

*'the methods of science and the concepts and theories of social affairs produce ways of thinking and ordering action and of understanding results.'*

My investigation has been theoretically driven in the sense that I use theories as a framework for data production, analysis, and writing. Theories 'informed' me about what aspects to observe from the infinite range of possible phenomena. In other words, theories made some 'things' in social life visible while others remained invisible.<sup>iv</sup> In the process of analysing and writing, I continuously 'modified' theories and data respectively in order to explore the problematics. My approach can thus be labelled 'abductive' or as a form of 'worldmaking' (Goodman 1978). I started out with a research question and then moved between literature and data to identify concepts and their theories that formed a problematic which I could continue to explore.

I drew on different theoretical traditions including hermeneutics, Marxism, post-Marxism and poststructuralism. Although these traditions are often listed as distinct and separate schools of thought, I saw them as complementary and historically and theoretically inter-twined. One common denominator in these different traditions is the commitment to anti-essentialism. Rather than using already-constituted entities or identities, their proponents have laid stress on the relational constructedness of social phenomena. The gradual process of taking socially constructed practices, ideas, places, and identities for granted is deeply pedagogical (cf. Gruenewald 2003). In this process, people learn to 'accept their existence as noncontroversial or inevitable, like the falling of rain or the fact of the sunrise' (Gruenewald 2003 p. 627). Within the above theoretical traditions however, commonsensical notions of present modes of social organisation or the naturalness of *being* are viewed with scepticism. A crucial objective for me was to unpack the cultural meaning of these notions.

My approach was hermeneutic in the sense that it was interpretative and focused on the social production of meaning. In the research process, I organised data into narratives through a strategy that Willis (2000, p. xi) calls 'ethnographic imagination'. This means that I brought different data into contact 'with outside concepts' as a way to invest the problematics with complexity and to 'deliver analytic and illuminating points not wholly derivable from the field but vital to conceptualizing its relationships' (Willis 2000 p. xi). The Weberian notion of 'ideal types' (Weber 2008) was another source of inspiration. Ideal types are analytical tools and not descriptions or representations of social reality: of phenomena, processes, places, or individuals. As argued by Bauman (2007 p. 23-24) the purpose of 'ideal types'

*'is to force our picture of the society we inhabit to "make sense"; to achieve that purpose, they deliberately postulate more homogeneity, consistency and logic in the empirical social world than daily experiences makes visible and allows us to grasp. Their roots are sunk deeply in the soil of human everyday experience and practices. But in order to attain a better view of such practices, their causes and motives, they need a distance that allows them to*

*embrace the field as a whole – so that the sight of human practices becomes more comprehensive and clearer to the analysts, also opening, it is hoped, the causes and motives to their actions to the actors themselves.'*

This hermeneutical approach allowed me to see different social phenomena *as something*. For example, I generally saw educational policies, processes, practices, theories and techniques *as* governance. This was a strategy outlined in the first article where I saw processes of individual formative evaluation in school *as* governance. In order to relate governing processes in school to the informants' own life projects in the further work I needed a theory that explained how education governance could be linked to their imagination, future orientations, and actions. Although governing techniques in school, such as progressive individual assessments and evaluation, might function effectively, they are somehow dependent on other cultural sources of meaning in order to acquire legitimacy. A hermeneutic perspective made it possible to create a link between educational governance and individual imagination by emphasising that individuals are embedded or constituted by processes of cultural and symbolic mediation. For example, Ricoeur (1986 p. 8) advocates that,

*'[u]nless social life has a symbolic structure, there is no way to understand how we live, do things, and project these activities in ideas, no way to understand how reality can become an idea or how real life can produce illusions; these would all be simply mystical and incomprehensible events.'*

This symbolic function, argues Ricoeur (1986 p. 8) is always 'already at work' even in the most primitive kind of action. For example, one might imagine how motivation for learning in school is dependent on students being 'integrated' in a symbolic structure of motives: 'I study because I want to learn how to read', 'I study because my friends study', 'I study because I want to become a doctor', 'I study because I want to please my parents' etc. The hermeneutic approach thus complemented the poststructuralist notion of governmentality (which is frequently used in studies of the knowledge problematic) in order to explore the linking of governing techniques to modes of thought and action. Consequently, my assumption was that, even current 'soft' and de-centered power regimes – at the most basic level – are dependent on individuals' integration in the symbolic structure of social life. Overall, the hermeneutical approach assisted my understanding of different historical, linguistic, or *narrative* dimensions of identity formation. Using a Foucauldian expression one might think of it as a kind of 'Hermeneutics of the Self' (Foucault & Blasius 1993).

Marxism and post-Marxism made it possible to explore how relations between education governance and social inclusion/exclusion are related to ideological processes of inequality, injustice, domination, and subordination.

Poststructuralist thinking assisted my efforts to comprehend the discursive dimensions of the production of included and excluded identities, e.g. how language and other forms of social semiotics constitute subjects and their relations within social fields.

At a rather late stage in the research process, I came across geographer Edwards W. Soja's (1996) transdisciplinary theory of human spatiality, historicity, and sociality, which became nuclear for my research. Soja's ontological starting point offered me both a crude version of the reality of my informants as well as a statement that guided the search for practical knowledge and understanding. Soja (1996 p. 71) argues that

*'the trialectics of Spatiality, Historicity, and Sociality (...) apply at all levels of knowledge formation, from ontology to epistemology, theory building, empirical analysis, and social practice'.*

Somewhat gaudily, Soja's imaginative writings combines Marxist, poststructuralist, feminist and post-colonial research. Inspired by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1992) his epistemology uses three overlapping perspectives: 'Firstspace', 'Secondspace' and 'Thirdspace'. Within this thesis, Firstspace refers to material and 'real' practices, such as measurable outcomes and the concrete experiences of schooling. Secondspace refers to a more mental and ideational field as in informants' imaginaries and their biographical version of the past, present and future. Finally, Third space refers to an alternative way of thinking which incorporates both of the former perspectives. It is thus a concept that tries to overcome some of the problems with established epistemologies: the shortcomings of objectivism-materialism and subjectivism-idealism separately and the 'oscillatory effect' that is produced when shifting back and forth between the two (cf. Grenn & Letts 2007 p. 64). The notion of Thirdspace is an ambitious attempt to open up researchers' imagination to the complexity of the social universe:

*'Everything comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history' Soja (1996 p. 56-57).*

For sure, I have not been able to embrace even a fraction of Thirdspace in my work, but I found theoretical and conceptual inspiration in the exhaustive and tentative nature of Soja's idea. Furthermore, the dynamic relations between 'the real' and 'the unreal' have been an important theme throughout my work. I have also played back and forth with the possibility of adapting Soja's



framework to the EGSIE-notion of the equity problematic and the knowledge problematic. The former corresponds roughly to Firstspace, whereas the latter can be seen as a combination of Second- and Thirdspace. The advantage of such trialectical thinking is that it appeared to work better in capturing the lived reality of my informants. Moreover, in the study of 'lived reality', the integrative notion of Thirdspace appeared to do better justice to the complementary ambition than the dualistic framework of the finalised EGSIE-project. As pointed out by Lefebvre (in Soja 1996 p. 7): 'there is always an-Other [third] term'.

The title of the thesis brings to the forefront three concepts – biography, space, and mobility – that I have found useful in order to explore relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. In the following, I elaborate on these concepts.

## The concept of biography

### The cultural dimension

Biography is a dynamic concept that brings together the ontological trialectics of spatiality, historicity and sociality into a unitary concept – identity. I have used this concept in different ways within the study. First, it became relevant against the background of social change, e.g. the process of individualisation (Beck 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2001; Giddens 1991). One might think of this as the cultural dimension of biography. For example, Giddens (1991 p. 54) argues that:

*'[t]he existential question of self-identity is bound up with the fragile nature of biography which the individual "supplies" about herself. A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor – important though this is – in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going'.*

For Giddens, biography is intrinsically related to what it means to be a human today: 'Each of us not only "has", but lives a biography reflexively organised in terms of flows of social and psychological information about possible ways of life' (Giddens 1991 p. 14). As such, biography relates to possibilities for future imagination and action. 'Life-planning', claims Giddens (1991 p. 85), 'is a means of preparing a course of future actions mobilised in terms of the self's biography'. Biography is hence associated with individualisation and new demands for individual responsibility. It is simultaneously a prerequisite for, and the result of, modernisation.<sup>v</sup> Beck (1992 p. 135) argues, in this respect, that:

*'[i]n the individualised society the individual must therefore learn, on pain of permanent disadvantage, to conceive of himself or herself as the centre of action, as the planning office with respect to his/her own biography, abilities, orientations, relationships and so on. Under those conditions of a reflexive biography, "society" must be individually manipulated...'*

My starting point has been that individualisation shapes and accentuates biographical reflexivity; and that this process might have a special dynamic in Sweden because of its particular historical welfarist background. For example, it is possible to imagine complex 'double bind' situations (Bateson 2000) arising in a society under severe transformation. Such situations might involve contradictions or discrepancies between ideals (formulated in policies or/and by individuals) and 'real' practices (in terms of outcomes and experiences). Individualisation might involve processes where institutions and experts cast contradictory ideas at the feet of young people who, as a result, are compelled to seek 'biographical solutions to systemic contradictions' (Beck quoted in Bauman 2002 p. 168).

Against this background, the concept of biography formed a conceptual reference to frame interviews, data, and writings on different cultural dimensions of identity. For example, I used biographical interviews to explore the ways informants understood their lives, i.e. how identity is related to both experiences and future orientations and how biographical reflexivity is related to action and participation. To a certain extent, I here follow an old tradition of social research. Already in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century researchers associated with the Chicago school of Sociology had used biographical methods to study, design and control social, cultural and individual change.

In this thesis, I have sought to address this double function of biography. I hence also used biography as a concept that draws attention to scientific, social, and educational techniques that deliberately seek to *produce* biographical identity and reflexivity. One starting point for my thoughts on biography as an 'identity-generator' has been the work of the German sociologist Alois Hahn (1998).

### **Biography-generators**

Hahn studied what he calls 'identity-generators', which are socially institutionalised devices that produce special kinds of biographical discourses: 'The theme of these discourses is, so to speak, a narrative form of identity or, in other words, the self as a tale told' (Hahn 1998 p. 27). Hahn differs from 'cognitivists' like Beck and Giddens in that he emphasises the social constructedness of identity. Hahn (1998 p. 27) asserts that, '[n]aturally, people everywhere have always had a life-course, a "Lebenslauf", but this does not necessarily mean that they have a biography'. According to Hahn (1998 p. 27):

*'[i]t can not be taken for granted that people speak about themselves, of their lives, their emotions, their intentions, their acts, etc., nor can it be taken for granted that they find listeners to such stories. The kind of biographical identity or textual self one has depends on the historically and culturally varying forms of biography-generators.'*

Hahn mentions generators in the form of confessions, anamneses (recollections and reminiscences), novels, diaries, and questionnaires. If these generators are lacking, argues Hahn, the self cannot take the form of a narrative identity. Hence, this particular kind of identity presupposes institutions of self-thematisation that produce both a social memory and a future oriented reflexivity. The most crucial aspect of biography-generators, 'is that *changing structures of society presuppose different forms of social control and various forms of biographical identities for the constituent populations*' (Hahn 1998 p. 28, emphasis added). In other words, these generators correspond to different cultural needs in societies and they work in order to govern people through their own reflexivity.

Overall Hahn's work fits well with Popkewitz's (2007; cf. 2001) genealogical writing on cosmopolitanism and school reform where biography is regarded as a technique to design 'the interior of the child', to install individual planning, self-responsibility and self-motivation. Bernstein's (1975; 2000) writings on visible and invisible pedagogy, evaluation, and learner identities have also cast light on these practices of schooling.

One important point of departure for me was to see the increasing documentation and evaluation of pupil's social and cognitive development in school as one of the most powerful manifestations of biographical identity formation in society. In the first article, I thus explore *biography as a form of education governance* (Lindgren 2007), using the work of the Chicago school of Sociology as my point of reference. This exploration formed an analytical background for the further work. It allowed me a way of understanding discursive processes of inclusion and exclusion in schooling and it made it possible for me to understand one of my own methods – the biographical interview – in a new way. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992 p. 36) has termed this process 'epistemic reflection' referring to an ongoing examination of 'the social and intellectual unconscious embedded in analytical tools and operations' (cf. Ball 2006). Thus, as I argued above, conceptualisation, data production, and writing have been integrated in my investigation.

## The concept of space

### The spatial turn

The local setting was a crucial part of the initial research design since the three case areas exemplified differing degrees of social and economic segregation. The empirical results in the original youth survey showed that attitudes and orientations in relation to education and social inclusion/exclusion differed between young people in the different social contexts. In addition, I had a tentative hypothesis that education policies on decentralisation might interact with and contribute to local differences. In the search for theories that could make it possible to link these aspects in an integrated way, I encountered the concept of space (cf. Lefebvre 1992; Massey 2005; Soja 1996; 2000; Harvey 2006).

The basis of this geographical concept is that space is simultaneously socially produced and socially productive. Space is not static, but under constant construction. Localities, places, areas and schools are not just neutral 'containers' where social processes and learning takes place, space is fundamental in exercises of power and the production of social injustice, culture, memory, experience, imagination and identity (cf. Foucault 1984; Green & Letts 2007; Soja 2000). As pointed out by Gruenewald (2003 p. 621) places are 'the centres of our experience' and we learn and become who we are in our relationships with each other and the world in different places. In this sense, 'places are profoundly pedagogical' (Gruenewald 2003 p. 621). They shape, in other words, our upbringing, in particular ways. Gulson and Symes (2007 p. 2), who speaks of a spatial turn in educational research, thus argue:

*'that drawing on theories of space contributes in significant and important ways to subtle and more sophisticated understandings of the competing rationalities underlying educational policy change, social inequality, and cultural practices'.*

### Landscape of the soul

The concept of space also provided me with a metaphor for understanding social experience (cf. Bourdieu 1999; Popkewitz 1997; Smith & Katz 1993). For example, it has previously been used to explore the functioning of the kind of manuals and registers that have evolved from the increased focus on individual capacities in education. As Hahn (1998 p. 7) points out, biographical self-thematisation and evaluation would be impossible without a given map 'of the landscape of the soul'. Popkewitz (1998) labels this phenomena 'the spatial politics of educational reform'. In short, he argues that pupils today inhabit, or are located, in discursive spaces that map out their personalities and capacities. These judgements and distinctions provide teachers

with the moral certitude and justification for evaluating their students. These mental maps govern the ways teachers ‘think, speak, see, feel, and act’ towards students (Popkewitz 1998 p. 29). They also affect the ways young people understand themselves. Young people may also use these maps in different ways in order to secure success at school or in the labour market. Overall, the spatial metaphor acknowledges how processes of social inclusion and exclusion are mutually intertwined. In this respect, educational practice functions ‘as a map in that it organises the territories of membership by producing boundaries between the members and nonmembers. Nonmembership is created every time membership is defined’ (Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg 1999 p. 19).

The insertion of space, as a complement to more common ways of acknowledging historical (or temporal) and social imaginations, opened new ways for me to understand the different dimensions of, and intersections across my object of study. For example, I tried to explore how social space interacts with the production of included and excluded identities in a decentralised and segregated school system. Space also became important as I realised that the future orientations of my informants, and the struggle for their realisation, were locally produced and involved movement through social and geographical space.

## The concept of mobility

### Mobile youth

Mobility is one of the most coveted values in our times and a central policy concept. As a response to changes in capitalist production in the latter part of the 20th century, the free mobility of capital, goods, services, and people has become closely linked to social and economic growth. At the same time, educational practices have become increasingly associated with individualistic discourses of responsibility for inclusion, lifelong learning, self-regulating entrepreneurial behaviour, and mobility. In policies, mobility is deemed the norm and it has become associated with ideas about progress, freedom, opportunity, and modernity (Creswell 2006). Such policies have also sharpened the obligations of individuals to be mobile so they can qualify themselves on the education and labour market. Educational researchers have analysed how national and international education policy discourse stresses flexible, self-responsible, and mobile behaviour (Johansson 2008; Olson 2008). These researchers see mobility as a concept that not only regulates but also alters our notions of citizenship and participation.

However, the concept of mobility does not have any self-evident place in educational research. This is somewhat strange since mobility draws attention to the practical and dynamic dimensions of social becoming at the expense of

the already achieved (Cresswell 2006). From this perspective, mobility is associated with features intrinsic to pedagogical theory and practice.

### ... and youth chained to place

Although policy analysis provided an important background for this study my empirical data also made me think about mobility as a concept referring to the 'lived reality' of my informants. It served, and serves, as a concept that ties education, identity, biography, space, and social inclusion/exclusion together with issues of power and social inequality (cf. Bauman 1998a; 1998b; Ohnmacht, Maksim & Bergman 2009; Urry 2008). Hence, as pointed out by Bauman, globalisation in fact means mobility for some people and immobility for others (Bauman 1998a).

In this thesis, mobility refers to patterns of 'perceived' (desired or imagined) and 'real' mobility, for example in the form of future dreams and aspirations or as actual transitions. Special attention is given to linkages between mobilities and social inequalities; i.e. how mobility possibilities or resources are unequally distributed in a segregated society. The idea of mobility also draws attention to the cultural meaning and 'discursive embedding of movement' that 'privileges some and disregards other movers and mobilities' (Manderscheid 2009 p. 40). For example, I was interested in how informants understood and handled socio-spatial movement. The capacity to be mobile was seen as a form of social capital that young people could use in order to accumulate other forms of capital, i.e. economic and cultural capital. Thus, the concept of mobility can be analysed in terms of *equity* (movers and non-movers) and *knowledge*.

The starting point in this thesis has been that the place of mobility in young people's lives is under constant change. Patterns, experiences, and orientations related to mobility may change due to new opportunities and obligations in a society increasingly based on segregation. My approach to mobility has thus been open and not defined in advance. In this sense, it has been an empirical task for me to fill the concept with meaning appropriate to educational research.

## Notes on methods, data and ethics

An explorative and trialectical approach to education governance and social inclusion/exclusion sees the world as complex, relational and multi-layered. Methodologically I thus relied on different techniques and produced data sets from multiple sources. As a 'bricoleur', I tried to select whatever insights that could be deployed without necessarily placing data in any order of precedence. My strategy of mixing methods resembles the so-called life history approach where biographical interviews are complemented by additional contextual data (Goodson 2005). First, I drew on data from the EGSIE-project (questionnaire

data with pupils from ninth grade, interviews with local politicians, administrators, and school actors). This data set was then complemented with biographical interviews conducted in 2007 and 2008 with a small sample of informants from the school classes that had participated in the EGSIE-study. In addition, I generated comparative information about these former pupils from national, statistical databases. The latter were derived, for instance, from the 'Longitudinal integration database for health insurance and labour market studies' (LISA). Additional data were gleaned from national and local reports, field notes, media reports, websites, and other miscellaneous sources.

I have generated and used data selectively in order to address the two research questions. The first question on optimistic future orientations of disadvantaged students placed the biographical interviews at the forefront. The second question aimed to explore local differences regarding measurable outcomes of schooling and the local production of included and excluded identities. I addressed this question by using the wider corpus of data. The exploratory purpose of the thesis also encouraged me to generate data that I did not know how to use in advance. The fourth article on mobilities of youth was an outcome of this open, explorative, and generative approach. Overall, the triangulation of methods and data was used in order to provide a more enriched, credible, and holistic understanding rather than as a means to assess reliability and total convergent validity of the different data sets.

Although this thesis is an empirical study, it is important to remember that the focus is not on the informants or on the three case areas (North, Park, and Garden). Rather than viewing them as the cases in themselves, I saw them as a means of exploring the relation between education governance and social inclusion/exclusion as loosely defined problematics within their real-life contexts.

## Selection<sup>vi</sup>

The basic idea behind highlighting three different social and geographical contexts in the Swedish part of the EGSIE-project was that they might generate insight into wider issues concerning the cultural, economical, and political workings of society. For example, how does social inclusion and exclusion relate to housing segregation? The choice of the EGSIE-project in selecting informants from the school level (students and school actors) to the political level (politicians and administrators) made it possible to study different aspects of local variation. My strategy in terms of selection was to continue to generate data that complemented the EGSIE-data in order to explore aspects of the original study's purpose and research questions.

The original EGSIE-youth survey questionnaire was designed by the Finnish research-team. Their basic idea was that national cases should facilitate a comparative international study with a *national* rather than *local* focus. This

design called for a statistical sample that was larger than that provided by schools at the three Swedish sites where interviews with politicians and administrators ( $N = 12$ ) and school actors ( $N = 47$ ) were conducted by Lisbeth Lundahl and Gunilla Zackari in 1998 and 1999. In the original youth survey, the sample of North students ( $N = 177$ ) were drawn from schools in three different places geographically remote and locally different. On the other hand, Park ( $N = 148$ ) was constructed out of two schools in this city area, and the Garden data ( $N = 88$ ) were derived from a single school. Totally, that is, the original Swedish survey included 413 young people.

In this thesis, I have chosen to organise data around schools located in the areas where local politicians, administrators and school actors were interviewed. This strategy limited the data to one school in North, one school in Park and one school in Garden. It allowed the creation of three distinct cases for studying local differences. The North data were derived from two classes in the same school ( $N = 53$ ) – the full complement of ninth grade classes at this particular school. By contrast the Park data ( $N = 68$ ) were drawn from three school classes (out of four). And, finally, the Garden data ( $N=88$ ) were drawn from three school classes (out of four).

In this thesis, therefore, I have utilised a sample of 209 informants. In Garden, one special class for newly arrived immigrant students was left out because of language reasons. These students belonged to a particular group in the sense that their grades were lower than the average in Garden. In Park, one class could not participate because of practical reasons (they were out of school).

I based the selection of informants for the interviews on a number of criteria. First, I wanted to meet with informants who had lived in their home areas and been students in the case-schools over an extended period of time. Secondly, it was a reasonable prerequisite that the informants still lived somewhere close to their home areas. Finally, I wanted to include the life histories of a selection of girls and boys that included both successful and less successful former students. I used personal identity numbers and information on grades that I had received from the schools and tracked down potential informants using the internet. I phoned them, introduced the project, explained procedures related to research ethics and scheduled interviews with informants who fitted the criteria and was willing to participate. I also asked them for information about other classmates who might fit the criteria and who might be willing to be interviewed.

My intention was to start by doing a first round of interviews with four informants from each site. In the next step, I would start to analyse these interviews before I continued to do more interviews. As it turned out, one scheduled interview in Park was cancelled and instead of doing a second round of interviews, I went straight on with analysis and writing. This means that I have drawn on a rather small total of interviews ( $N = 11$ ).



To map out patterns of social inclusion and exclusion, I ordered longitudinal data on the period between 2003 and 2006 from Statistics Sweden (SCB). This sample included all the pupils sampled from the selected school classes in North, Park and Garden (N = 250). This represented a larger sample than I had gathered – a discrepancy that arose because some pupils were not at school on the day I had chosen for sampling. Moreover, one of the Park school classes was organised in two mixed-ability learning groups of which one did not participate in the survey. Despite this discrepancy, I have treated the samples as total surveys.

### **Conducting interviews**

I chose to conduct biographical interviews in order to address the study's purpose and my research questions. The biographical interviews served to complement and further explore the results of the original EGSIE survey that to some extent had failed to capture the semantic and reflective aspects. The interviews thus aimed at constructing narratives on education and social inclusion and exclusion emanating from local discourses and biographical experiences of youth in the three contexts. A particular focus was the biographical understanding of schooling and identity.

Biographical interviews have been used to address the kinds of research questions raised within this study. For example, to investigate:

- how 'educational policy manifests itself in the lives of individuals' (Kridel 1998 p. 4)
- relationships between educational processes and social change (Kridel 1998)
- how individuals and groups acquire identities, learn, labour, construct meaning, form communities and otherwise lead their lives as they grow up (Kridel 1998)
- how less-privileged groups have provided views of life at the margins of social and political possibility in places within oppression and emancipation is deployed simultaneously (Kridel 1998)
- individual transitions and conditions of life in rapidly changing societies (Chamberlayne, Rustin & Wengraf 2002)

In a Swedish context, there are rather few examples of biographical studies that relate to these topics. Pérez Prieto (1992) combined biographical interviews with other data in order to develop a framework for the understanding of student's experiences of schooling. Lidström (2009) used a biographical perspective in her study of young unemployed adults and their school to work transitions.

The usage of biographical interviews in research has been discussed extensively (e.g. Casey 1995, Chamberlayne, Bornat & Wengraf 2000, Bertaux 1981, Merrill & West 2009). One type of criticism draws attention to the validity or structure of biographical accounts in terms of memory. For example, how does the present situation as well as the time between events affect how informants constructed memories? What is included or omitted; recalled or distorted; separated or combined; and organised or reorganised; and how does all of this affect the results of research? These are all important epistemological and methodological questions that I have spent a lot of time pondering.

Another potential problem is how biographical research may create an intimate relation, or even a 'dangerous liaison' between researcher and informant (Smith 1995, in Kridel 1998). Before I started to conduct the interviews, I was afraid that I would *not* be able to create an intimate relationship with the informants. For example, I was afraid that the social, geographical, and age-related distance between the informants and me could have a negative impact on the interviews in terms of power. However, during the interviews I felt no problems in this respect. (Doing the interviews was in fact the most interesting and enriching experience of the entire doctoral work). In dialogue with the informants I decided when and where to meet (most often in libraries or cafés). We would start off informally and I would once again present my study and the conditions for their participation. The fact that the informants were the true experts of the interview-topic – 'their lives' – might contributed to altering potential problems in terms of asymmetrical power relations (cf. Czarniawska 2004). During the interviews, I offered some examples from my own life in terms of biographical examples of problems or failures. In this sense, biographical interviewing was an interactive, mutual exercise (cf. Ehn 1992; Pink 2000; Pérez Prieto 2006).

For sure, meeting with these young people affected my interpretations and writing. For example, it became difficult to reduce the informants to the status of victims of 'structures'. I have reflected on how the method itself 'created' a certain notion about the informants in this respect. As pointed out by Dahlgren and Hultqvist (1995) the introduction of more 'qualitative' research designs in youth studies might actually be related to the invention of the particular subjects that frequents current policy discourses.

I used a detailed list of questions during the interviews (see Appendix 2). I tested this set of questions in one pilot-interview before the first main interview. I had used this interview technique before (Lindgren 2004). After each interview, I evaluated the list and made necessary corrections, reformulations, retractions, and additions. During the interviews, I felt free to add questions or re-arrange the structure of the list. Often the discussion moved across topics addressed in the list. Overall, it worked well to use a semi-structured design.

Most importantly, I could feel secure that I would not cease any interview without having asked crucial questions.

Even though I was primarily interested in general patterns, the manual shows that questions ranged from the personal to the general. Sometimes the informants would answer the former type of questions by retreating to discussions that were more general. As pointed out by Ehn (1992 p. 207, my translation), this is a normal procedure where the informant strives to 'normalise the picture of herself and to typify her experiences'. In a way, the informants assisted me in the research process by, during the interviews, starting to transform unique biographical accounts into general discursive patterns (cf. Ehn 1992).

The interviews lasted between one hour and three and a half hours and I recorded them on a digital voice recorder. I was careful not to schedule more than two interviews on one day. Following that model, I had time to do a quick written evaluation of each interview and I could also be sure that I was thoroughly rested for each occasion. The informants did not receive any compensation for their participation.

### **Analyses of interviews**

I moved the audio-files onto my computer, converted them into WAV-format and imported them into a commercial program. This program made it possible to store, listen, sort, code, and transcribe the interviews. I organised the audio-files in a way that I could easily find and listen to particular interview fragments. Since I continuously worked with the sound files, it was possible for me to remain close to the original interview situations.

The biographical accounts, and particularly the usage of terms like time, future, past, and mobility, displayed examples of how the informants' lives were organised and structured by the symbolic mediation of culture (cf. Pérez Prieto 2006). I identified two biographical outcomes: (a) biographical accounts as the transmission of referential experience and (b) biographical accounts as narratives 'shaped by themes, interests, and principles of organisation' (Ehn 1992 p. 215). I thus used the data as both reports on actual conditions and processes *and* as narratives to deconstruct. During the analysis, I tried to see these outcomes as 'biographical versions' of the equity problematic and the knowledge problematic. Within the former approach, language is seen as a reflection of reality and within the latter approach, language is seen as speech acts with the potential to shape reality (cf. Pérez Prieto 2006). In the third article I used a similar strategy to relate these data to First-, Second-, and Thirdspace-versions of Garden and Park.

The analyses were closely linked to the problematics highlighted in the articles. If I identified an interesting theme in the interviews, I would continue

to sort and code data by exploring that particular problematic. For example, it was striking how the concept of mobility, which was not a central concept when I designed the interview manual, seemed to open up and provide new meaning to the life histories.

The size of the sample gives rise to questions on methodological warrant. For example, it might be questioned whether a few narratives carry weight as comparative research. As argued by Yeates (2003), small sample qualitative research designs can claim 'interpretative comparisons'. The interpretative comparisons within my study were tentative and examined in dialogue with other complementary data, secondary data, and literature sources. For example, I 'triangulated' my interview data on local learner identities with the voices of school actors on the same topic. Some of the informants proved to be particularly reflective and articulate. These informants became so called 'key informants' (Patton 1987) whose accounts played a more important role in analysis and writing. Overall, the epistemological assumptions on comparison and generalisation are different in this thesis from those in traditional large-scale survey-based research. These assumptions, which to some extent resembles Fritzell's (2009) notion of 'reconstructive validity', seeks to acknowledge the situated local conditions, the wider socio-historical contexts and the ideological relations between the two. One important aspect was the attempt to explore particular cases (or biographies) within a larger scheme that enabled comparisons in terms of differences regarding social conditions.

## Longitudinal data

I generated longitudinal data on education, unemployment, income, and social benefits as a way to address the problem of equity: To what extent did the informants from the three contexts have access to further education and work? Longitudinal data thus framed my discussion of the first research question on relations between 'objective' and 'subjective' life chances. This data set also helped me discuss the second research question on outcomes of schooling in terms of statistical patterns. Finally, it also made it possible to explore youth mobilities in the fourth article.

I picked out a number of indicators from the 'Longitudinal integration database for health insurance and labour market studies' (LISA) in dialogue with Statistics Sweden. These indicators included information on participation in post-compulsory education: Studdelt; Studdelt Typ (Abbreviations used in LISA), employment: Ssyk 3; Ssyk 4; SsykAr; SsykKalla; SsykStatus, income: Loneink; LoneinkJ; Kapink, unemployment: ALosDag, social allowance: SocBidrPersF; SocBidrTypF; SocBidrFam. I sent Statistics Sweden a SPSS-sheet where I had included identity numbers and information on eligibility for upper secondary education and home area for each informant. In return, I got a SPSS-sheet where the identity number was removed, but where new information was

added for each informant for the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. The year 2003 was the year that most informants of this cohort finished upper secondary education while 2006 was the final year of the database. Since the original youth survey was not designed as a follow-up study these sheets were not coded individually. Therefore, I had no possibility to relate survey data to the longitudinal statistics on an individual level. Focus thus remained on the local level.

The basic idea was to use these indicators to map out what had happened to the young people from the school classes that took part in the original youth survey. Some of the indicators proved to be rather difficult to interpret. For example, information on income did not appear to reveal much about local economical differences since participation in education (particularly in Park) worked in order to lower incomes. There are also hidden statistics concerning unemployment, income, and social welfare (particularly in Garden). In addition, there are general problems associated with the reliability of these kinds of indicators in longitudinal research designs. For example, the institutional usage of indicators (such as those of the grading system in school or definitions of unemployment or social exclusion) changes over time. Overall, this longitudinal data verified familiar patterns of spatial social positioning and I drew rather sparsely on them.

## **Secondary data**

My secondary data involved EGSIE-interviews carried out by Lisbeth Lundahl and Gunilla Zackari. Data from the interviews with local politicians related to transcriptions. I have also drawn on a written report where these data were available (Lundahl 2001). Data based on interviews with school actors referred to a written report (Zackari 2001). In these written reports, interpretations and analysis had already 'shaped' the collection and analysis of data. However, the data had been generated and analysed by researchers who used a theoretical framework similar to my own.

Other secondary sources were grades, official statistics, local evaluation reports, reports from the Swedish national agency for education, local websites, and news reports. These sources of information were often difficult to use in the writing process without over-riding the anonymity of areas. Nevertheless, they offered me a broader picture that I was able to use in order to qualify my analysis.

## **Ethics**

This study involved exposed and vulnerable individuals, groups, and areas. Moreover, the interviews and the statistical information contained personal information that needed to be treated with respect and strict confidentiality. Overall, I tried to integrate ethical aspects in the reflexive research process. One

problem refers to the usage of schematic categorisations (i.e. stereotypes) in terms of 'immigrants', 'the excluded' or descriptions on the young people living in different kinds of localities. Such simplified categories are always related to reproduction of patterns of stigmatisation and subordination. My work can be (and has been) rightfully criticised in this respect, but I hope that it has also provided new perspectives and insights, especially regarding the situation in the so-called areas of exclusion.

Overall, I followed the ethical guidelines of The Swedish Research Council (2002, currently under revision). Interviews were organised through 'informed consent', meaning that the informants were informed about the project's general goals and had the opportunity to break off the co-operation at any time. I treated all the data material confidentially. Before I was allowed to buy statistical data from Statistics Sweden, the doctoral project had to undergo a separate ethical review. Temporarily established registers with identity numbers (based on official class lists from schools) could not be related to other personal information and were destroyed after their initial use.

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<sup>iii</sup> As noted by Miller (1998) this approach involves a high level of generalisation. In order to grasp 'the larger picture' I have been forced to put aside issues of diversity.

<sup>iv</sup> For example, the issue of gender is rather invisible throughout the thesis.

<sup>v</sup> It should be noted that both Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens played important roles in the design of the Third Way-politics of Gerhard Schröder and Tony Blair (cf. Giddens 1998).

<sup>vi</sup> Appendix 1. includes tables that provides an overview on how I have used the most important sources of data, the youth survey, the longitudinal statistics and interviews with former students, in different articles.

# PREPARATION OF THE ARTICLES

In this section, I discuss the preparation of the articles and provide a brief background to their origins.

## Article 1. Biography as Education Governance

The work with this article started during the preparation of my fieldwork. While conducting literature studies on biographical methods I came across the so-called life history approach that corresponded to the research design that I had begun to sketch out. From the outset, my idea was to use biographical interviews, or life histories, in combination with other contextual data, such as documents established by schools about individual students, in order to explore processes of social inclusion and exclusion. I learned that scholars associated with the Chicago school of Sociology, during the early 20th century, developed the life history approach. They combined ‘subjective’ experiences with ‘objective’ data in order to understand and manage complex problems of cultural and urban change, migration, and integration, i.e. phenomena closely related to my research.

I met with study counsellors in compulsory schools in Umeå in order to get information about what kind of records that schools keep. I understood that record-keeping practices were on the increase and that schools produced a range of such records. These documents were not only created for students at risk, they were established for all students and aimed to track students from pre-school to upper secondary education. I also learned that there were substantial local differences between schools regarding this practice.

However, when I contacted the schools included in my case areas they replied that it was impossible for them to find and/or give me the material I was asking for. My interpretation was that principals were busy doing other things, but also that their responses were strategic. Could it be that they were protecting themselves and the teachers from critical scrutiny? Maybe they were also protecting the personal integrity of students and parents in this way?

I decided to drop the idea and adjust my research plan. I became interested in the practice of documentation *per se*. I had started to see the various similarities between the biographical research of the Chicago school of Sociology and the current usage of biographical registers in Swedish schools. Just like early 20<sup>th</sup> century American sociologists Swedish teachers were

collecting and organising data, conducting interviews, and circulating questionnaires. Moreover, the policy ideas that motivated this practice in Swedish schools were very similar to the progressive political ideas of social reform advocated by the Chicago school. I decided to conduct a genealogical study of biography as a form of education governance.

In the article, I thus focus on the two end-points of this biographical technology in relation to social inclusion and exclusion: the conditions of emergence and effects. I show how many contemporary policy ideas were possible to identify in the political visions of the Chicago school. I also argue that this technology serve to foster identities that correspond to increased demands on responsibility and self-government in the society. The notion of biography as a form of education governance acknowledges how presumably objective documents about individuals and their development are social constructions providing images and versions of individuals that interact with their identities. This technique, which I label *student biography*, may conserve excluded identities over time and restrict the possibilities for students to actually become something else or new. This practice also entails various ethical problems as school documentation contains personal information of students and their families. Moreover, it might cause feelings of humiliation in parents as teachers take on the right to define the truth about children.

To conclude I suggest that student biography works in order (a) to evaluate complex qualities and ideals that contemporary schooling aims to produce and (b) to govern individuals by installing a specific form of future-oriented self-evaluating reflexivity and by generating meaning and motivation. Consequently, this governing technique constructs students as both objects for assessment (the student as textual fabrication) and as relays for continuous self-assessment. In the article, I also discuss student biography as a practice that prepares young people for the increased demands on individuals to document and communicate their competences in a de-regulated labour market.

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## Article 2. Diaspora biographies balancing ideology and utopia – On future orientations of immigrant youth in a segregated Sweden

The point of departure for this article was the results of the EGSIE-youth survey that indicated that informants from the segregated Garden, where less than 50 percent of the students were annually eligible for Upper secondary education, had the most optimistic future plans. It addressed the following



research question: How is it possible to understand the fact that disadvantaged students from a segregated area have such optimistic future orientations in relation to further education and work?

By conducting biographical interviews with former students in Garden, Park, and North, I wanted to explore these orientations. Among the informants were three refugees from Garden that came to Sweden in the early 1990s: 'Djamel', 'Dijedon' and 'Nadia'. Their biographical narratives appeared to shed light on my research question. In relation to the narratives of the informants from Park and North, theirs appeared to be more coherent and 'stronger'. My interpretation was that these narratives provided particular meaning, motivation and an explicit notion of the future that supported their ambitious 'life projects'. These stories were also framed by utopian projects launched by their parents; namely, the flight to the democratic welfare state in Sweden as a search for a better life.

In the EGSIE-project, Lindgren (2003), I had turned to interpretations in terms of 'false consciousness' in order to understand the mismatch between 'objective' and 'subjective' life chances in the lives of young people from Garden. I had described how these young people were (somehow) led to believe in meritocratic ideals that masked structural injustice and that explained social exclusion as the responsibility of individuals. Even though such explanations are conceivable and useful I now looked for theoretical tools that could provide a more dynamic understanding.

In order to theorise the relationship between biographical narratives and identity I eventually turned to Paul Ricoeur's ideas on the narrative self. Ricoeur's hermeneutics brings the question of time, space, identity, and individual action together with the symbolic mediation of culture. In Ricoeur (1986), I also found a theoretical framework that shed light on my research question about the utopian imagination of young people living in an 'area of social exclusion': Ricoeur's lectures on ideology and utopia.

Ricoeur's anthropological notion of ideology has three interrelated levels. On the basic level ideology is a question of integration into the social universe of language, symbols, and ideas that make societies, schooling and individual action possible. At the second level, ideology is about the usage of ideas in governing. It is a question of legitimacy, i.e. how people are to be governed without relying on brutal force or pure domination. Ideology here works in order to produce motivation by adding a certain surplus value to our belief in education as a means for self-realisation so that our belief corresponds to the claims of education reform. Ideology thus fills the potential credibility gap in the educational system that emanates from problems associated with the problems of equity. At the final level, ideology is about distortion, dominance, and subordination. Here Ricoeur draws attention to how notions about who we are, what we do or are capable of doing tend to be blurred and systematically

privilege some groups and deprive other groups. Whereas ideology tends to conserve social relations, utopia is a concept that describes ideas and actions that challenge the existing order.

In the article, I introduce the concept of utopian diaspora biography (UDB) in order to explore the informants' ambitious orientations. By using Ricoeur's notion of ideology, I was able to reframe my thoughts on 'false consciousness'. The problem of ideology here is not a choice between false and true, but between representation and praxis. Ideology is not located in the 'false consciousness' of individuals, rather ideology is the very fabric that constitutes individuals through 'false consciousness'.

UDB describes a process whereby a high level of aspiration concerning education and labour is accumulated as a consequence of the social, temporal and spatial dynamic of the biography. Utopian diaspora biographies refer to fragile projects that reproduce ideological notions of meritocracy, social mobility, and individual agency. However, they may also explore individual possibilities and thereby challenge hierarchies in a segregated education- and labour market. In the article, I suggest that UDB implies a movement between different internal systems of ideology and utopia – between a modern, Fordist system and a late modern, post-Fordist version.

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### Article 3. Spaces of social inclusion and exclusion. A spatial approach to education restructuring and identity in Sweden

This article is an attempt to develop new understandings of education restructuring and the consequent local production of social inclusion and exclusion in Sweden. Differences between schools in different areas regarding transitions to further education and work – the most common way to measure relations between education and social exclusion – have become dramatic during the last decades. These patterns also tend to relate to patterns of housing segregation that evolved during the 1990s.

At the same time, schooling has become increasingly directed towards the construction of self-governing and responsible pedagogic identities that are supposed to make integration and participation possible. Moreover, decentralisation has allowed the local freedom to adapt schooling to the needs of pupils. Few educational studies have tried to analyse potential relations between spatial change and unintended outcomes of education policy change in this respect. In this article, I try to address this problematic by raising the

following research question: How is it possible to understand local differences concerning schooling and outcomes of schooling – both in terms of statistical patterns and in terms of the identities produced – in a decentralised, individualised, and segregated school landscape?

My approach is heuristic in the sense that I explore the potential of using a spatial theory to address an educational problematic. More exactly, I use geographer Edward W. Soja's (Soja 1996; 2000) notion of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace. The article highlights two of the case areas: Garden and Park. I use a wide range of data such as biographical interviews with former students, longitudinal statistics, policy documents, local reports, and additional EGSIE-data such as survey data and interviews with local politicians and school actors.

The analysis shows that students from Garden were more often excluded from further education and were dependent on social welfare to a higher extent. They also faced low expectations in school. Their teachers saw them as 'immigrant students' with poor cultural capital and deficient language skills. With reference to these students' particular interests and needs, they were collectively excluded from the new educational processes of self-responsibility that explicitly aim to foster social inclusion. Whereas learner identity in Park appeared as dynamic and in line with ideals mentioned in policy texts and by school actors, the corresponding identity in Garden was limited and narrow. A tentative conclusion in the article is that pupils from Garden suffer a double disqualification: in terms of formal exclusion from further education and in terms of the identity produced at the same time.

In the article, I discuss how ethical ideals of decentralisation and participation, and the evaluation of such policies in terms of access to further education and work, dissemble the local production of excluded identities. Soja's spatial framework informs an understanding of how an amalgamation of material conditions and spatially guided representations produce local social inclusion and exclusion in school. In the article, I argue that Soja's framework may contribute to further educational studies by encouraging eclectic and complementary approaches.

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Lindgren, J. (2010b). Spaces of social inclusion and exclusion. A spatial approach to education restructuring and identity in Sweden. *Education Inquiry*, 1(2), 69-89.

## Article 4. Mobilities of Youth – Social and spatial Trajectories in a Segregated Sweden

In this article, Lisbeth Lundahl and I use the concept of mobility to explore relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. We argue that the concept of mobility opens up an important interdisciplinary area of research that few educational researchers have defined as their object of study.

Our focus is on the mobilities of former students from the three case areas North, Park, and Garden. The article is based on a life history approach (Goodson 2005). Life history interviews with a small sample of former students were complemented with other contextual data, e.g. EGSIE-questionnaire data and longitudinal statistics.

Mobility was a theme that, during the analysis, evolved as being important. As the informants spoke about their dreams, their strivings, their failures and their success in realising their biographical projects it was clear that mobility – their attitudes towards, their understanding of and their resources and capacities to deal with mobility were important to the overall problematic. In other words, it was not clear from the outset of the study that mobility was central to processes of social inclusion and exclusion.

In the article, we look for ideological effects of mobility in terms of social production of inequality and social exclusion. We draw attention to the fact that geographical mobility, as a form of human agency, is closely related to both space *and* class, ethnicity, and gender (Ball 2006; Bourdieu 1984; Kaufmann et al. 2004; Urry 2000; 2008). We explore how space and inequalities become related to education, social inclusion, and exclusion in North, Park, and Garden as young people are animated to move, want to move, dream about moving, try to move, and fail to move through, in and out of different communities (cf. Gulson & Symes 2007 p. 2). We also seek to understand how mobility is made meaningful and how notions about mobility also structure and enable action (cf. Cresswell 2006).

The analysis displays how mobilities of youth are framed by local traditions and conditions that both enable and restrict. Our data supports Bauman's (1998a) general thesis that mobility is a 'stratifying factor' in society. The possibilities to move to desired places, for example, on the education market, are unequally distributed between young people and between places. This is a picture that differs from the policy discourse on mobility, which is based on sociological narratives of individualisation and increased individual possibilities for moving in social and geographical space.

The analysis shows a severe discrepancy between the imagined and real mobility in Garden. Using Bauman's terminology, the informants from Garden were relatively 'chained to place'. The freedom to act and realise ambitious

plans seems to be highly regulated by local conditions in Garden. Informants from all three areas have had difficulties in handling transitions from compulsory school to upper secondary school. Although there are statistical patterns related to class, ethnicity, gender, and place, our analysis seeks to move beyond schematic typologies such as those of an immobile working class and a mobile middle class. Drawing on the biographical interviews, we discuss how mobility might involve processes of personal development and learning and become a calculus for sustaining an aspirational career. This attitude towards and usage of mobility is discussed in terms of ‘cosmopolitan predisposition’ (Szerszynski & Urry 2006) and ‘mobility capital’ (Jonsson 2003). However, our data show that it is possible to embody some of these dispositions without being particularly mobile and, conversely, it is possible to be mobile without them. In the article, we discuss the deliberate refusal to be mobile as a form of agency.

Lindgren, J. & Lundahl, L. (2010). Mobilities of Youth – Social and spatial Trajectories in a Segregated Sweden, is a under review for *European Educational Research Journal*, 9(2).

Note about collaboration: Lisbeth Lundahl has contributed additional references and commented on successive drafts.



## ARTICLES 1-4

This section includes the following articles:

1. Lindgren, J. (2007). Biography as Education Governance. *Discourse. Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 28(4), 467-483.

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2. Lindgren, J. (2010a). Diaspora biographies balancing ideology and utopia – On future orientations of immigrant youth in a segregated Sweden. *Young*, 18(2). (In print, paginated by the author).

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# Biography as Education Governance

Joakim Lindgren\*

Umeå University, Sweden

This paper examines the increasing interest of Swedish schools to construct, analyze, assess and control the individual progression and social integration of students using biographical registers. I argue that this tendency—involving biography as a form of governance—can be seen as a revision of early 20th-century biographical research by the Chicago School of Sociology. In this paper I consider the theoretical, methodological and political background of the Chicago work in order to compare it to the Swedish use of *student biographies*. Their current use involves a twofold subjectification of students—as “objects” of assessment and as “relays” for assessment. Finally, this subjectivity is understood in relation to international initiatives in education restructuring where new ways of governing—often labeled as progressive—impose social control, heighten individual responsibility and, not least, create new forms of social exclusion.

No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society, has completed its intellectual journey. (Mills, 1970, p. 12)

If a science wishes to lay the foundation of a technique, it must attempt to understand and to control the process of *becoming*. (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927, p. 36)

... attitudes and intimate situations revealed in the life-story not only shed light upon the fundamental nature of the behavior difficulty, but, along with the other case material, afford a basis for devising a plan of treatment adapted to the attitudes, interests, and personality of the child. (Shaw, 1930, p. 17)

## Introduction

Swedish school students are increasingly subjected to documentation, assessment and follow-up processes. These are recorded in individual study programmes,<sup>1</sup> individual development plans, written assessments, individual action plans, transition documents, portfolios, etc. (Hofvendahl, 2004, 2006; Johansson, Ahl, Andersson, From, & Holmgren, 2005; Lindh & Lindh-Munther, 2005; Markström, 2005; Nordin-Hultman, 2005). To a greater extent, the educational system has taken on the task of organizing “learning histories”; that is, to construct, analyze and control

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\*Department of Education, Umeå University, SE-901 87 Umea, Sweden. Email: joakim.lindgren@educ.umu.se

the qualities, abilities and subjectivity of individuals from pre-school (age 1) to upper secondary school (age 20). One way of interpreting this focus on the progression and the continuous remaking of the individual is to understand it as the application of a pedagogical technique that I refer to as *student biography* (SB).<sup>2</sup> This tendency intersects with current international discussions of education restructuring that build on individualization, decentralization (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004a), rationing (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000), efficiency, assessment, measurement, life-long learning, participation (Daun, 2003), partnership (Franklin, Bloch, & Popkewitz, 2003), performativity (Ball, 2003), evaluation (Segerholm, 2005), governmentality (Foucault, 1991) and governance (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004b; Rose, 2000).

In this article I discuss biography as a form of education governance. On the basis of a historical critique of the biographical method and Swedish contemporary examples I want to discuss how biographical ideas and practices in education affect social inclusion and exclusion as a part of this restructuring. I start with a brief description of SB and education governance that leads back to the first empirical biographical studies of the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s. My aim is to show how this biographical method was put to work in early 20th-century US-reform and then, on the basis of this review, I return to the current Swedish situation in order to discuss the political ambitions and the practice of SB.

### **Student Biography and Education Governance**

Charles Taylor (1989, in Giddens, 1991, p. 54) has argued that in “order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where were we are going”. Biography is the modern form of meaningful and coherent narration that provides answers to such questions. Biography is also the name of the scientific method or technique that, in various ways, asks questions, listens, documents and analyzes such narratives. From a semantic point of view, the word “bio-graphy” implies the ability to write and inscribe words on a singular life. As such biography creates the individual as well as a consensus about what a human being is supposed to be (cf. Foucault, 1993, p. 224). Education governance relates to the changing relationships between the state, educational policy and school systems; and is sometimes described in terms of governmentality (Foucault, 1991). It refers to the reformulation of policy practices and administrative procedures from socio-political issues into instrumental tasks. It refers to strategies, tactics, processes, procedures or programmes for the control, regulation, shaping, mastering or exercising of authority over others, in a particular context (Rose, 2000, p. 15).

I perceive SB as a pedagogical technique to construct the individual as an object open to analysis, assessment, development, adaptation, assimilation, change and control. As such, it is associated with a new kind of teacher professionalism based on increased documentation. This technique, however, includes seemingly contradictory tendencies. It involves progressive ideas on social learning as well as intensified cooperation—or partnership—between home and school. Through these

techniques neo-conservative ideas on raising standards through testing are validated and neo-liberal about freedom of choice, decentralized responsibility and individual guilt are realized (cf. Apple, 2005). Different, often incommensurable, modes of thinking—biological, medical, psychological, social and religious—are evident in this eclectic discourse. Together, they constitute an essentialist theory of the construction of normal or abnormal individuals.

The assertion of this paper is that SB derives from an investigating, interpretative and reformatory base associated with the very first biographical studies carried out by the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920 and 1930s. As techniques for the construction of biographies, they share the same blend of positivist epistemology, interpretative methodology, Christian mentality and a reformer's desire to control the process of becoming.

### **The Chicago School of Sociology—The evergreen tree of “liberal practicality”**

Thomas S. Popkewitz (1987, 2000) has argued that the Chicago School of Sociology played an active part in early 20th-century reform in the United States. By focusing on the social (and thereby changeable) nature of thought and self, and by emphasizing how humans were characterized by factors that were a consequence of their own action in society, culture, upbringing, etc., the Chicago School became the perfect companion for the development of the progressive welfare state. The Chicago School responded, therefore, to the growing belief that, by solving social problems, social sciences could control and influence the development of the individual as well as the overall society (Holmqvist, 2004, p. 228). According to Popkewitz (2000, p. 161), the 20th-century social reform in the United States connected the two registers of social administration (the evolution of a new, more liberal and democratic society) and freedom (the construction of the autonomous, participating, and self-realized individual).

The theories and methods of the Chicago School, argues Popkewitz (2000, p. 164), grew out of theology and social work, rather than pure science (cf. Rosenow, 1997; Thröhler, 2006). “The research focused on issues of social control . . . that were not only to improve the life situation of the poor but also to remake the poor and immigrants. Chicagoans William Isaac Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, authors of the pioneering biographical study *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1927, p. 1), provide a striking example of this outlook: “Our success in controlling nature gives us confidence that we shall eventually be able to control the social world in the same measure”. Thomas and Znaniecki's (1927, p. 80) “investigations” of “abnormal attitudes” made them draw the conclusion that “there is hardly any human attitude which, if properly controlled and directed, could not be used in a socially productive way”. Popkewitz (2000, pp. 158, 161) highlights how such sociology actively worked in order to change “the inner capabilities of the individual” and “to administer personal development, self-reflection, and the inner, self-guided

moral growth of the individual". In *The Polish Peasant* this is elaborated as a "problem of individualization" and as a "problem of efficiency" (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927, p. 78). The authors ask how individualization can be made useful and constructive, maintaining that "an organization based upon a conscious co-operation in view of a common aim is the most compatible with individualism" (p. 78). Efficiency is also calculated by making such social techniques conscious, not just an arbitrary act of "magic" and "ordering-and-forbidding". Their assumption was that the technique ought to be made visible—based on "common sense" and "practical sociology"—in order to be effectively controlled and evaluated (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927, pp. 2–4).

Criticism has frequently been directed towards progressive Chicagoans (cf. Denzin, 1992, pp. 56–57; Simich & Tilman, 2004). Clarence Karier (1977) also examined John Dewey's "pragmatic liberal philosophy" and his objective, in the name of democracy and pragmatism, to work for mutual understanding and shared interest. Such "enlightened self interest" was to be a vehicle of social control that would promote industrial interests in the early 20th-century America. Karier (1977, p. 26) claimed that, through Dewey's pragmatism, American intellectuals "became servants of power within the liberal state". This view of Dewey resonates with C. Wright Mills's (1966, pp. 379–383) earlier critique of Dewey's "biologization" and "methodization" of value phenomena, his incrementalist approach to the domain of sociopolitics and, through his adherence to Darwinian notions of adaptation, his inability to recognize conflicts of interest and power. According to Mills (1970, p. 100), advancing the "organic metaphysics of liberal practicality" identifies a harmonious balance in the political status quo: "The political order itself is seldom examined; it is merely assumed as a quite fixed and distant framework". Mills also sees the notions of "cultural" or "pathological lag" as elements in this "utopian" style of thought. The need of progressive technology to change something (e.g. the immigrant, the backward, the delinquent, the socialist) in order to "bring it in line" works through judgements disguised as statements about a time sequence.

As an evaluative assertion of unequal "progress", cultural lag is of great use to men in a liberal and optative mood: it tells them what changes are "called for", and what changes "ought" to have come about but have not. (Mills, 1970, p. 100)

Daniel Thröhler's (2006) analysis of the protestant (Calvinist) mentality of the Chicago School indicates how Darwinist and Christian ideas were integrated into a super-adjustable quasi-secular model of liberalism that aimed at "realizing the kingdom of God on earth". As Max Weber noted, Calvinism was characterized by an enormous strengthening of the systematic control of behavior in all aspects of life and, especially, with the introduction of a life-ideal that was based on self-control (Hahn, 2005, pp. 9–10). This mode of self-control, closely connected to the spirit of capitalism, was in fact installed through a conversion of the confessional act where salvation was no longer dependent on single deeds, but instead became a consequence of divine predestination that was constantly present and reflected in relation to the bearer's own life—or biography—as a whole (Hahn, 2005, p. 9).

My copy of *The Polish Peasant* is signed by A. G. Myrdal, Chicago 1929.<sup>3</sup> Alva and Gunnar Myrdal were famous Swedish politicians and scholars who frequently visited the United States, were close friends with William I. Thomas and Dorothy Thomas, and also had contact with Ernest W. Burgess, another important American sociologist (Vinterhed, 2005, p. 99). There is, I suggest, a close affinity between the ideas of the Chicago School of Sociology and the “social engineering” subsequently advocated by the Myrdals (cf. Hirdman, 1989). But whereas the Swedish model of social reform drew on an idea of a strong paternalistic state, the US version implied a minimal state where social control was secured in terms of subtle progressive ideals of social responsibility that, in fact, have remained compatible with neo-liberal or Third Way thinking at the end of the 20th century (cf. Hirdman, 1989; Rose, 2000, pp. 119–125).<sup>4</sup> I will return to this issue later, but first it is necessary to give a description of the biographical method as a social technique.

### **The Classic, Objective Natural History Approach—Biography as social technique**

Early biographical studies in Chicago dealt with questions of cultural assimilation, social control, social evolution, anti-social behavior, deviance, immigration, democracy, individualization, and modernization. *The Polish Peasant* was an attempt to understand and solve intercultural problems by using biographical materials and interviews. Clifford R. Shaw's *The Jack-Roller: A delinquent boy's own story* (1930) aimed to show the relationship between a delinquent's life experience and the development of his (*sic*) antisocial career, while demonstrating that the subject's own story was valuable in the understanding and treatment of his problems. In the editor's preface to *The Jack-Roller*, the new biographical method—life history—is compared to the use of the microscope in biological science. Editor Ernest W. Burgess declares that the invention of the microscope not only made it possible to “penetrate beneath the external surface of reality and to bring into clear relief hitherto hidden processes within the organism”, but also to discover and treat the presenting disease. “Like a microscope”, Burgess continued, the biographical method enables the researcher “to see in the large and in detail the total interplay of mental processes and social relationships” (Shaw, 1930, p. xi).

The life history method, also labeled the “classic, objective natural history approach”, was built on a common sensical position that Bourdieu (1995, pp. 68–75) has referred to as a “biographical illusion”; namely that every single life has a natural history that unfolds over chronological time marked by objective events and experiences. The classic approach had an ambition to put all aspects of a life under examination, to reveal “the inner life of the person, his [*sic*] moral struggles, his successes and failures in securing control of his destiny” (Shaw, 1930, p. 4). Besides the subjective experiences of individuals captured in their “own story”, documents and registers were supposed to validate the objective truth of the individual. These were statements from family members and professionals (medical, psychiatric,

psychological, legal, etc.) as well as documents (family histories, records, reports; see, for instance Denzin, 1989, p. 51). In his analysis of *The Jack-Roller*, Denzin (1992) points out its mixture of realism and constructionism:

[The classic approach] . . . presumes that "an objective" record of a life can be given, and that this objective report lies in documents and records which detail the life in question. It fails to consider the possibility that these other documents are themselves social constructions, social texts which create their own version of the subject. (p. 39)

In other words it failed to acknowledge how the conventions of the "biographical illusion", unconsciously embedded in the method and the specific mode of writing—the romantic tale—in fact constructed delinquency as the object of study.

The Chicagoans entered the lives of social deviants in order to listen to their confessions and to supervise their recovery. With regard to the detailed information supplied by the new biographical methods, Denzin (1991) has argued that these studies were actually a part of a new "surveillance society". The analysis located the deviant in a social context in order to establish their "otherness". The problem, however, was given a psychological and individual explanation by referring to certain negative and anti-social qualities (Denzin, 1992, pp. 38–40). The solution of the problem was about interaction and values. It was the delinquent individual, his family, neighborhood and school that were supposed to establish a progressive reformation which would install the proper values. But it still was the individual, or his personality type, which was to blame if reform was not successful (Denzin, 1992, p. 43). The Chicago sociologists created the reflexive biographical subject, argues Denzin, and moreover, they literally created the individuals that frequented their research. Months before his death Stanley, the original "Jack Roller", thanked sociology for having made him (Denzin, 1992, p. 41)!<sup>7</sup> According to Denzin (1992, p. 41) this summarizes the accomplishment of the biographical approach: "It transformed subjects into sociology's images of who they should be".

To conclude: Denzin (1989, pp. 44–45, 52) alleges that the Chicago approach was a logocentric and subject-centered initiative where the authors believed that real subjects with real intentions, emotions and characteristics could be captured in texts that revealed true meanings. It sustained a romanticized view of the subject. Informed by social realism, it upheld the political and economical *status quo* through an over-identification with society's undesirables: "It is romantic ideology woven through liberal and conservative political agendas which make individuals responsible for their own problems" (Denzin, 1992, p. 44).

Overall there appears to be a relation between the ideas and work of the Chicago School of Sociology and the liberal governance that emerged in 20th-century United States. The empirical findings of the biographical method (*life records*) constituted the "perfect type of sociological material" (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927, p. 1832) and biography became an important social technique. Popkewitz (2000, p. 171) has argued that the current global focus on capacity in education can be understood as a revision of turn-of-the-century concerns with "the social administration of governing



the soul as the doxa of work and school reform—the unquestioned belief and normative imperative of reform to remake the person”. Drawing on Popkewitz, my argument is that the current presence of SB in Sweden is related to the “classic, objective natural history approach” developed in the 1920s and 1930s. My thesis, moreover, is that such a comparison can shed light on the practice of SB as a part of the current education restructuring.

### **The Political Ambition of Student Biography**

The practice of SB is, as suggested, supported by current education restructuring. In 1994 Sweden changed the means of governing the school system from steering by rules to steering by objectives. Responsibility for the progress of the student was thereby decentralized, while the demands for planning and documentation increased (Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, 1999, p. 32). SB is also stirred up by the ongoing integration of pre-school, pre-school class, compulsory school and leisure-time aspects of school practice, something which was made possible through a collation of different curricula in 1998. The reorganization of these functions into an integrated school system has been justified in various ways. Reference is made, for instance, to the value of cross-curricular cooperation and to “the qualitative whole”; to the possibility of following and supporting each child over time, to meeting the needs, interests and prerequisites of different children, to improving the continuity of learning with individual information and documentation, and the value of fostering parental influence over the school life-time of their children.

The central establishment of a compulsory individual development plan in 2005 fortified the tendency towards using biographical registers to monitor the social and emotional development, and learning of students (Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, 2001, pp. 37–38; 2005). The individual development plan is a document that explicitly gives school students knowledge about and influence over his or her learning. This initiative is explicitly justified as a measure to “encourage the student to take responsibility” (Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, 2001, p. 37) to involve their parents; and to affirm the action plans or the “agreements” made by “teachers, student and parents” (Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, 2002, p. 19). Above all, it aims to create continuity for the student in the event of changes in their teacher, class or school.

The likely abandonment of timetables in compulsory education, as suggested by a National School Timetable committee in 2005, is likely to make such individual planning, documentation and evaluation more important (Swedish Government Official Report, 2005, p. 101). Such a reform has been suggested as part of an effort to involve parents and make them “positive towards the school and its development” (Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, 1999, pp. 32, 60). At the time of writing (Autumn 2006), there is political will to (re)invent biographical means of understanding and controlling the process of becoming in the interests of greater social integration, greater support for democratic values, and further improvement in

the social and intellectual development of students. As an analogue of Thomas and Znaniecki's vision, this technique has resulted in a growing amount of documentation. In a recent state inquiry the growing documentation in Swedish schools has been mapped out and analyzed in order to determine the legal status of different documents in relation to questions of secrecy and personal integrity. Serious ethical and legal problems have come up as very sensitive individual information has become either public or illegitimately concealed by protective schools.

Four document categories were identified in the state inquiry (Swedish Government Official Report, 2003, pp. 82–83):

1. *Documents drawn up by regarding pupil welfare.* These include formal records and decisions, etc., in matters of pupil welfare, special action programs, individual action plans, special commissions, tests, notes, journals, etc.
2. *Documents drawn up by schools regarding student learning:* grades, written assessments, written information connected to development dialogues (see below), individual study programs, study planning, follow-ups of study results, records kept by staff regarding the performance of students.
3. *Correspondence regarding students:* letters and written communication to or from students, parents, staff, and other agencies.
4. *Miscellaneous documents:* information that is exchanged when students change schools, documents drawn up by students; tests, papers, assignments and folios prepared by students.

### **Student Biography in the Making**

One element in school record keeping derives from the school-based personal development dialogue. It is obligatory for teachers, the student and his or her parents or guardians to meet at least twice a year to discuss the student's intellectual and social development. One outcome, as noted above, is an individual development plan. The personal development dialogue constructs the learning history of the student between the ages of 1 and 20, and the process aims to strengthen home-school relationships. At the policy level, this activity is presented as a progressive idea supporting dialogue, partnership and democracy. Partnership is not only to be understood in terms of social aims such as participation and integration, but also can be seen in terms of attempts to open up space between the state and civil society for the governing of individuals through creating more personal responsibility and self-government in line with neo-liberal and Third Way thinking (Franklin et al., 2003, pp. 9, 15). The wish to install such mechanisms is evident in analysis of written information connected to the personal development dialogue in 11 classes in seventh to ninth grade (Johansson et al., 2005). These documents constitute a detailed and fine-meshed aura of control and judgement. The student is made more visible (or rather "transparent"), rendering them more open to grading and ensuring that they display themselves to the teacher. These documents deal with the development of the whole pupil—his or her achievement, capacity, behavior,

attitudes—how and what they think and feel. They celebrate self-government, participation, responsibility, efficiency and conscientiousness; and also social dimensions such as the ability to control fellow students, to be glad and cheerful, and not have a negative or querulous attitude (Johansson et al., 2005).

One crucial component in the practice of SB is the separation of the individual and pedagogical context into two separate entities. This separation makes it possible to focus on the qualities of the individual at the expense of the context. This is evident in an analysis of the work of pupil welfare teams in three comprehensive schools (Hjörne, 2004). The official task of these teams is “to promote the general development of the pupils, that is to promote their emotional and social development and give support to pupils with special needs” (Swedish Government Official Report, 2000, p. 49). Hjörne (2004) claims that—

pedagogical issues concerning how teaching and learning are organised, and to what extent these practices could be causing difficulties for pupils with different backgrounds, are almost never addressed ... By leaving pedagogical practices unexamined, and by not considering their potential relation to the problems that occur, the staff appear to accept current practices as given and not in need of modification. (pp. 59–60)

The focus on the individual is a feature of SB, the construction of a schematic and standardized narrative about the pupil that functions as a reference point in relation to institutional practice. A language of individual deficiency creates the identity of the pupil by referring to essentialist medical concepts such as ADHD and DAMP,<sup>6</sup> or to other psychological, cultural or social deficiencies of the student.

Hofvendahl (2006) has also produced valuable work in this area. He studied semantic aspects of 35 fifth-grade personal development dialogues between teachers, parents and students. These discussions focused on different social dimensions and, especially, the capacity of students to be reflective about their achievements, behavior and feelings. This is evident in a teacher's comment on the self-assessment comments of a “student with difficulties”:

Teacher: Further on you have written this way yourself, Joakim: “Have to learn to write quicker and neater”. I think it was good that you have thought about that yourself. (Hofvendahl, 2006, my translation)

This kind of “evaluation commendation” (Hofvendahl, 2006) contributes to the construction of a reflective student and it also constitutes a foundation for the practice as such! After all, it is the reflectivity of the student that makes the dialogue possible and even the most ordinary feelings and thoughts are considered to objectify and discipline the self. Hofvendahl introduces the term “paperization”<sup>7</sup> (*förpappning*) to capture the fact that written documents more and more have come to play a decisive roll in the meetings between home and school; “everything considered, felt, meant, thought, etc., shall be written down on paper” and/or digitalized. This is a typical response to the increasing interest shown by teachers in the different “voices” that students accumulate in their SBs as they pass through the school system (e.g.

those of teachers, child minders, pre-school teachers, personal assistants, leisure time pedagogues, school nurses, educational psychologists, parents and students).

My interpretation is that the existence of multi-voice biographies points to a change in teacher professionalism. The new teacher has become a multi-tasking priest, psychiatrist, doctor and researcher who hears confessions, conducts interviews, takes anamnesis and asks students and parents to prepare for meetings by filling out questionnaires. By such means the new teacher considers, even celebrates, the subjective opinions—or the “own story”—of parents and students. As a confession these practices function to foster social reintegration (cf. Hahn, 2005, p. 2). Only by explicitly examining their own achievements, behavior and feelings in front of a teacher will the maladjusted (“sinful”) student or parent earn the future support of the school. The will to cooperate and confess is a prerequisite of reintegration. This form of dialogue also establishes an intimate relation between the parties that renders possible a kind of gentle governance. As a form of anamnesis SB aims at constructing an individual case history, or as the etymology of the word suggest; to actually “*put in the students mind*” (from *mimneskein*) the memory of past events. The access to the subjects *definitions of the situation*<sup>8</sup> makes it possible to design measures, presented as offers and benefits, that are deliberated as a mutual agreement, a contract with explicit references to the subjects own feelings and needs (cf. Börjesson & Palmblad, 2003, p. 99; McGowan, 2005). As Lybarger (1987) argued, the idea that the “need” of students ought to determine activities and measures in school stems from the work of John Dewey:

Need in 1916 and need today implies dependency; a defect in the moral, intellectual, or personal make-up of the student ... which must be addressed by a particular activity ... The idea of need suggests that the weak needed the strong to define the characteristics they required to be useful citizens. (p. 186)

At the same time, teachers are continuously ready to adjust the, at times, “incorrect” opinions of parents and students by referring to the objective point of view of the professional. Hofvendahl (2006) concludes that such discussions do not invite students and parents to become serious participants. On the contrary, the teacher uses them in order to deliver a monologue and to submit a written version in the form of a report of the discussion. In other words, the teacher in question combines the benevolent and seductive language of dialogue and deliberation (using the pronoun *we*) with the authoritarian and corrective language of the omnipotent professional.

This has also been found in another study concerning the relation between home and school. Andersson (2003) interviewed parents of 40 fifth-grade students and found in particular that “resource-weak” parents with children experiencing “difficulties” have negative experiences of meetings with the school. These parents report extensive experiences of not having been involved, respected or listened to. They portray themselves as losers in a struggle to define the truth about their own children. Many of them feel victimized, blamed and even insulted by teachers telling them that they are responsible for the maladjustment of their children in school.

Such narratives inform about the wish to direct and individualize responsibility and also about problematic ethic dimensions connected to the utilization of biographical methods known from the classic Chicago approach.

Nevertheless, the student actively takes part in this process. In contemporary biographical research the mutual and intertwined contribution to the empirical result is considered as inevitable and noticed as an epistemological and ethical problem (e.g. Ferrarotti, 1981, p. 20; Pink, 2000, p. 103). But current educational practice is based on the early 20th-century sociology and its mixture of realism and constructionism. Increasing the volume of documentation is supposed to provide a better truth about the individual. As Denzin (1992, p. 39) has pointed out, these documents can also be regarded as social texts that create their own version of the subject. In this sense SB is both governing and interpretative because it produces “new objects of analysis for which treatment are invented” (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004a, p. xi). The educational system thereby constructs pedagogical problems amenable to analysis, assessment, development, adaptation, assimilation, change, and control. In other words:

The governing is produced through the field of practices in which the rules and standards of methods interact with the empirical world to form boundaries about what is known and how it is to be known and act [*sic*] on. (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2001, p. 16)

## Conclusion

In this article I have discussed the employment of certain kinds of biographical ideas and methods in progressive attempts to integrate young people into society. I have linked the 20th-century biographical research of the Chicago School of Sociology with the early 21st-century usage of a pedagogical technique that I refer to as student biography. I have focused on the paradoxical consequences of SB, i.e. how progressive ideas run the risk of producing social exclusion and developing even more sophisticated means of control and discipline.<sup>9</sup> From what we know SB might serve to realize life chances (existing relatively independent of this practice). The self-revising gaze of SB might also produce extensive feelings of anxiety. For some it might function as a decisive support. But for others it might turn out as a “biographical violence” that creates their exclusion and leaves them with the responsibility of fulfilling the promise of life style choice.

The research that I have drawn on illustrates how progressive pedagogy embodies particular (non-universal) patterns of ordering and selecting. As Popkewitz (2000, p. 163) has noted there is a paradox in the current restructuring that goes back to the early 20th century. Education as a social administration of freedom harbors an aspect of social exclusion. Whenever practices define groups of pupils as deviant, it is an identity that they quickly adapt to and have problems shedding. In this process teachers have become involved in the construction of “pupils with problems” (Hult & Hultqvist, 2005) and SB has become a “perfect” method. By constructing a

narrative of how the individual became who he or she is, the individual is presented as consistent and contingent—something which also means that they are ambiguously on the inside or outside of the local educational norms. Hence this pedagogical technique constitutes a part of “the system of reason that functions as a governing practice through producing principles that qualify and disqualify individuals for action and participation” (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004b, p. 70).

Obviously biographies are not only created in the school. Giddens (1991, pp. 14, 54) has argued that biography is not only something an individual in modernity “has”, but also “lives”. These narratives, “*the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography*” (Giddens, 1991, p. 53), are “supplied” by individuals themselves and are structured in relation to different kinds of institutions. Fischer-Rosenthal (2000) labels this process “biographical work”:

The work of orienting the temporal process of the individual’s life and of social change can be termed “biographical work”. Biographical work is a practice that has been developed in modern societies in order to solve some of the main issues of integration and order. Biographical work is a way to orient the individual and make him or her reliable for institutions in a historical social situation when static personal definitions (such as status) or quasi-natural phases of a life-cycle are not sufficient for this purpose. A biography has to be both flexible and definite, integrating and open for new, unexpected situations and needs. Biographical work applies to both the individual and the institution and is utilised by both. (p. 115)

Even though SB is a practice that serves its own means according to a distinct institutional practice it ought to be understood as a part of, or more accurately, as a preparation for, this social process. One example of an institutionalized extension of SB is Europass, the European Commission attempt to create transparency, flexibility and transnational mobility in the EU by a coordination, rationalization and computerization of the documentation of workers’ skills and qualifications (see Mitchell, 2006).

SB is exercised and found profoundly necessary by school staff as well as by students and their parents in order to secure individual progression and integration. The mutuality between professionals, parents and students in the construction of student biographies can be understood in relation to the notion of governmentality (Foucault, 1991). As a secular form of confession this technique is directed towards telling the truth of an individual life and governing its subsequent performance and adjustment. It also captures how individuals change and adapt to this mode of thinking and acting—a governing of their free and autonomous self. As such the installation of biographical reflexivity opens up a kind of immanent “governable space” (Rose, 2000, pp. 31–34) that is concerned with the future control of each person. Accordingly SB involves a twofold subjectification: students are subjectified as *objects* of assessment in relation to a specified standard and as *relays*, encouraged to continuously evaluate themselves and their own activities (cf. Miller, 1992, pp. 67–68). Through this technique the individual runs the risk of being caught in a frame of reference that is maintained over time inside and outside school. In accordance with Ricoeur (2005) it is possible to raise the question whether

biography—in the form of knowing one’s own history—sometimes means a kind of confinement, or as Reiter (2003, p. 271) puts it; a “colonialization of the future by the past”. The memory accumulator-aspect of SB therefore has implications for identity and, not the least, the nature of meetings between teachers and child throughout the long process of schooling.

You once washed off  
the memory of me  
all my memories of myself  
One day I shall also launder  
your memory, wash off your memories of me  
so that nothing stands between us.  
(Ekelöf, 2004, p. 513, translated by David Hamilton)

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## **Notes**

1. Swedish terms are, if possible, translated according to the official dictionary for education and research available at the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture: <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/02/07/44/4926b65e.pdf>
2. This development is contemporary to an international paradigmatic shift in thinking that can be found across the social science disciplines—a shift that has been characterized as a biographical turn (Chamberlayne, Bornat, & Wengraf, 2000, p. 1).
3. Ref. 94-4273: 1, University Library of Umeå.
4. Pragmatic ideas of social responsibility, often advocated in the discourse of deliberative communication drawing on Mead and Dewey, have a significant impact on contemporary Swedish educational research as well as on Swedish educational policy and practice (Englund, 2005; Tholander, 2005, p. 115). Overall, Dewey has a status of an “indigenous foreigner”, a hero of progress, in the Swedish history of school reform (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 175).
5. However, the 75-year-old Stanley, looking back at his encounters with his “creator”, Clifford R. Shaw, also expressed feelings of humiliation and hostility: “If anyone ever had an influence on me it was Shaw ... He would laugh at me, you see ... I would be inclined to say, ‘Who the hell is this guy, I’d like to punch him in the nose’” (Snodgrass, 1982, in Denzin, 1992, p. 41).
6. DAMP (Deficits in Attention, Motor control and Perception) is a Swedish term that coincides with the neuropsychiatric diagnosis ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).
7. In the meetings between home and school papers or print-outs are of primary importance but ICT is also widely used and specially designed Internet-based tools are available on the market (cf. <http://www.unikum.net/iup/>).
8. It is worth noticing that this process involves a kind of reinvention of the famous Thomas dictum which was originally a theoretical position held by the Chicagoans (Denzin, 1989, p. 52): “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, pp. 42–43).



9. With regard to Denzin's remark on the link between the early biographical studies and the origin of the "surveillance society" it is worth mentioning the substantial increase of camera surveillance in and outside Swedish schools (municipal compulsory- and upper secondary school). According to the Swedish Data Inspection Board (2005) this phenomenon increased from almost 0 to 8% between 2003 and 2005. Another 14% of the schools were about to install cameras in the near future.

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# Diaspora biographies balancing ideology and utopia

## - On future orientations of immigrant youth in a segregated Sweden

JOAKIM LINDGREN

*Department of Education, Umeå University*

This is a paper on the utopian life projects of immigrant youth in a disadvantaged Swedish community. These projects are analysed through the concept of utopian diaspora biography which describes a process whereby a high level of aspiration concerning education and labour is accumulated as a consequence of the social, temporal and spatial dynamic of the biography. Utopian diaspora biographies, it is suggested, are fragile projects that reproduce political notions of meritocratic social mobility and individual agency. However, they may also explore individual possibilities and thereby challenge hierarchies in a segregated education- and labour market. The risks and potentials associated with these modernist projects are analysed through Ricoeur's (1986) thoughts on ideology and utopia. It is suggested that the diaspora condition implies a movement between different internal systems of ideology and utopia – between a modern, Fordist system and a late modern, post-Fordist version. The paper is based on life history interviews.

**Keywords:** ideology; utopia; biography; diaspora; future; education; youth transitions; social exclusion

In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up.... (Foucault, 1986: 27)

The place of work in everyone's imagination and self-image and in his/her vision of a possible future is the central issue in a profoundly political conflict, a struggle for power. (Gorz, 1999: 54)

## INTRODUCTION

Zygmunt Bauman (2003: 12) has argued that utopian projects reflects a 'nearest to universal' human 'urge to transcend' in a quest for something better. This paper focuses on a particular form of such a modernist project: immigration to the welfare state of Sweden that originates in different forms of overseas oppression and, through immigration, that accumulates strong or even idealized notions of future possibilities. In Sweden studies have shown that immigrant youth, regardless of the social background of their parents, tend to have high aspirations concerning education and labour (Ljung, 2000; Knocke & Hertzberg, 2000; Lindgren, 2003). Such optimistic and meritocratic notions, however, contrast with studies examining inter generational reproduction of social exclusion. These studies have displayed correlations between, on the one side, school results, drop out rates, transition to higher education and

labour market integration of young people and on the other side the economy, education level, ethnicity and the degree of housing segregation of their parents (Jonsson, 2001; Swedish National Agency of Education, 2005, Swedish Government Official Report, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. This correlation has the potential of creating a severe discrepancy between ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ life chances. In one response to this potential conflict between harsh reality and intangible visions, different school actors, most often study counsellors, try to cool down and adjust the ‘unrealistic’ aspirations of immigrant students to their ideas on what students of ‘primitive’ or ‘patriarchal’ cultures are capable of achieving (Sawyer, 2006). This act is related to a form of misdirected compassion and, indirectly, serves as yet another example of racial discrimination.

In this paper I will adopt a perspective on this problematic that transcends dualisms such as true/false and objective/subjective: Paul Ricoeur’s thoughts on ideology and utopia (Ricoeur, 1986). I want to explore these utopian projects by using a biographical perspective. Though I am particularly interested in the social and cultural imagination that is related to such projects I treat them not as mere dreams disengaged from reality. Instead, I see them as something practical with the potential of shaping the lived reality of individuals. These projects are conflated with class, ethnicity, gender, time and place. But the aim of the paper is not to identify causal relations between the realization of particular forms of projects and certain groups of immigrant youth. The aim is to explore the production of utopian imagination and to discuss how these imaginaries are related to and challenge the dynamics of social inequality.

## **NADIA, DIJEDON AND DJAMEL – A VIGNETTE**

In the exploration I use life history interviews with Nadia<sup>2</sup> from Bosnia, Dijedon from Kosovo and Djamel from Algeria who all went to school and grew up in one of the most disadvantaged segregated city areas in Sweden. When they finished the ninth grade in 2000 less than 50 percent of their fellow schoolmates qualified for entry into a ‘National Program’ at the Upper secondary level (which is a prerequisite for higher education). The national average that year was 89 percent. Their school is situated in a city area exposed to an intersectional social problematic related to poverty, stigmatization, poor education, exclusion from the labour market, restricted housing conditions and poor health. Many students in the area are refugees with languages other than Swedish. In terms of student performance, this school ranked among the poorest schools in Sweden.<sup>3</sup>

In the early 1990s Nadia, Dijedon, Djamel and their families escaped civil war or political persecution, seeking a new and better life in Sweden. Nadia fled with her mother and older sister to Croatia in 1992 where they stayed with relatives for one year. Together with the father the family then escaped to Sweden. Nadia’s father is an engineer and her mother is an economist. They both have university degrees but in Sweden they took temporary jobs in other sectors. In Kosovo Dijedon’s father worked as a fitter in a factory and the mother took care of the household. When the father lost his job in the turmoil of the Bosnian war they decided to leave the Balkans. In Sweden the parents have been unemployed but are now working in different labour market projects for persons with disabilities. Djamel was born in



Algeria but because his father was imprisoned, tortured and pursued by the regime, the family fled to Iraq when he was three years old. In Iraq persecution continued and the family eventually fled to Sweden. His father is a trained engineer and the mother is a school teacher. In Sweden they have both worked as assistants in compulsory education. For a couple of years, the mother has not worked for health problems. The father is now working in a family company started by the older brother. Nadia is currently studying law at the university. Her objective is to work with international conflicts. Dijedon has a university degree in media and is struggling for a job as a cameraman. Djamel has his own electronic enterprise but he often thinks about his lack of formal education.

Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel are 24-25 years old. Their lives are caught up in a struggle between two cultural systems and their complex biographical narratives are distinguished not only by feelings of hope and gratitude but also of guilt and anxiety. Together, these feelings have provided motivation and meaning in relation to their 'life projects'. I shall therefore identify their biographies as utopian diaspora biographies. This concept will be elaborated below, but first I will provide some contextual background to the overall problematic. After that I will relate this discussion to a theoretical framework based on the complementary concepts ideology and utopia.

## **DIASPORA BIOGRAPHY AND THE SYMBOLIC MEDIATION OF CULTURE**

This paper's use of biography builds on Paul Ricoeur's notion of the narrative self; that is, the 'process of self-constancy and self-rectification that requires imagination to synthesize the different horizons of past, present and future' (Kearny, 2004: 108). Biography implies a dynamic, non-substantialist, notion of identity that acknowledges how narrative dimensions – the stories individuals tell of their past and the way they project their future – are intertwined with their self-understanding, action and the symbolic mediation of culture. Accordingly, social, cultural, and structural conditions and changes are related to the motivational structure and the time horizons of individuals. These conditions and changes are associated with a whole spectrum of biographical 'gains' and 'losses' for young people (Ziehe, 2000). They are also intrinsically intertwined with the above problematic of utopian life plans among immigrant youth.

In the following I will frame the biographical narratives with 'outside concepts' related to the symbolic mediation of culture (Willis, 2000: xi). These do not belong to any coherent theoretical framework, but I use them as an analytical frame to discuss biographies under processes of globalization and individualization. My argument is that immigration implies a spatial, social, and temporal movement which influences biographical orientations. The question here is hence how such orientations are formed in trajectories that unfold under globalization; that is where young people move from poor agricultural societies, dictatorships and/or war zones to the current Sweden.

In late modern Europe, young people's transitions from youth to adulthood, and from school to work, are characterized by de-standardization, individualization and fragmentation.

These ideas are drawn from Andreas Walther's model of European transition regimes (Walther, 2006). Different regimes describe social spaces that are 'structured by a complex system of socio-economic structures, institutional arrangements and cultural patterns' which influence biographical orientations (Walther, 2006: 124). According to Walther, such regimes constitute 'climates of normality' which 'includes ideological concepts and cultural values' (Walther, 2006: 135). By using the regime model as an 'interpretative background' it is possible to explore differences between different social spaces (Walther, 2006: 136). Normally, individuals' views on themselves are consistent with the current conditions and possibilities: 'As young people's orientations and strategies reflect the resources and opportunities they can "normally" expect and the "legitimacy" of their aspirations, transition regimes represent the different realities in which young people's biographies are embedded...' (Walther, 2006: 136). Sweden, as an example of a universalistic regime, is distinguished by emphasizing personal development, by motivating young people and by empowering their individual aspirations (Walther, 2006; Stauber, 2007). The regime model does not include the home countries of the informants in this study. However, it is still possible to use the basic notion of different spatial realities in order to discuss how orientations inform immigrant trajectories.

The formation of such subjectivities can also be conceptualized by referring to concepts like modernity and late modernity and to Fordism and Post-Fordism. During modernity, time concepts in general had a utopian element, based on the conviction that 'an imperfect present' could 'be recast so as to create a perfect future' (Nassehi, 1994: 48). Today such time concepts are threatened by a pragmatic politics formulated under the pressure of transnational corporations (Nassehi 1994; Jacobsson, 2005). Overall the modernist – fixed, all-embracing and eternal – vision of social reform appears somewhat strange and out dated. In other words, '[t]he utopian model of a "better future" is out of the question' and 'happiness has become a private affair; and a matter for here and now' (Bauman, 2003: 22-23). Transformations of subjective temporality have also been discussed in relation to young people's identities; experiences, future orientations and transitions (cf. Leccardi, 2005; Walther, 2006; Stauber, 2007; Vinken, 2007). It has been argued that the present situation has brought with it a 'crisis in the "normal" biography' (Leccardi, 2005: 124). '[Y]outh as a preparation for work, adulthood as work performance, old age as retirement' is no longer the standard formula for the temporal biographical narrative (Leccardi, 2005: 124). The relativization of traditional identities, understood in terms of individualization (Beck, 1998), is believed to open up possibilities for choice and agency and for the transformations of identity. Mayer (2005) has described the historical transition from Fordism to post-Fordism and the effect of this transition on young people's life courses and future orientations. Today life cycles are characterized by discontinuity, interruption, delay and not, as was the case under the earlier Fordist regime, by stability, continuity, progression and *upward mobility* (Mayer, 2005).

The formation of identity is also related to what has been described as a fundamental crisis in late modern societies; the crisis of authority and legitimation (Boltanski, 2006). According to this thesis, there has been a radical and important change in the ways young people conceive authorities and experience meaning in late modern societies. In the past authority was most often taken for granted. Nowadays young people seek justifications and

explanations for authority – authority is always in question (Boltanski, 2006). In the field of education, this crisis questions the foundations of knowledge (often discussed in terms of postmodernity), rendering the authority of teachers insecure and, in the process, obstructing the learning motivation of students – ‘Why shall I learn this?’ (cf. Hultqvist & Petersson, 1995: 211). In Sweden the meritocratic legitimacy of education is also threatened by decades of declining social mobility (Jonsson, 2004). Although education is still considered as an important investment there is no longer a clear cut relation between achieved educational merit and labour market integration.

All these historical changes have an impact on the future orientation of young people and they are intrinsically conjoined with the actions and biographical constructions of young people (Lecardi, 2005). For example, whereas young Swedish people in the mid-20th century grew up under social euphoria where literately everything was getting better and education was conceived as a ‘spearhead into the future’<sup>4</sup>, the youth of today face a social and reflexive backlash that has been described in terms of the risk society (Beck, 1992). In studies of social mobility it is possible to identify this particular pattern. Under modernity working class parents supported their children and had high hopes that their children would break loose. Under late modernity this vision is less evident (Trondman, 1993: 269-270).

But what about immigrant families that have come to Sweden in search of a better future? The fact is that among current immigrant parents, including those who are poor, without formal education and a secure labour market position, there is often an explicit utopian vision (Hilding, 2000; Sawyer, 2006). Such differences raise questions about how subjectivities are constructed in an era of global mobility. Is it possible that the sensitivity of individuals towards symbolic mediation of culture is related to their biographical experiences?

In his autobiography Ronny Ambjörnsson (1996), professor emeritus of the History of Ideas, provides an interesting point of reference for this discussion. He describes how his biography, and his climbing of the social ladder in the 1950s and 60s, was integral to the societal progress in Sweden. His and many other working class children’s lives were conjoined with ‘...history itself: the expansion of higher education after the second world war, investments by the Social democratic party regarding education and research, the changed labour market and the general discussion on making use of the talent reserve [the gifted working class youth]. The children were the bearers of a utopian vision’ (Ambjörnsson, 1996: 47, my translation). According to Ambjörnsson his ‘class journey’ was strongly supported by his parents but it was no ‘deliberate break up, rather a process launched by factors beyond our control, a form of destiny adjoined to a world in transition’ (Ambjörnsson, 1996: 23). This mode of self-understanding harmonizes with Ricoeur’s dynamic conceptualization of the narrative self. It describes the transition from an early industrial life course regime to a Fordist regime which is similar to the spatial and cultural journey that the informants of this study have experienced. Utopian imagination, as a prerequisite for human action, is thereby ‘constituted in the course of collective history’ and ‘acquired in the course of individual history’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 467). Overall, Ambjörnsson’s autobiography serves as a point of reference for the discussion of the intertwined cultural imagination of utopian diaspora biographies. These are likewise structured by a dialogical relationship between two

cultural systems (in Ambjörnsson's case related to social class) which fosters intricate experiences of marginality and an intensified self-consciousness (cf. Park, 1928). Diaspora biography henceforth refers to a hybrid and displaced narrative self (cf. Hall, 1990). Dijedon, one of the informants, gives a sententious summary of this condition:

Many people of my age live in two worlds and they want to be in them at the same time. This might lead to a situation where you end up nowhere. Many of us have had big dreams, but when they are not realized, you might end up in no man's land. Then your world view collapse and you might not know what to do.

In the following I will elaborate on the concept utopian diaspora biography drawing on the life history interviews with Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel. Utopian diaspora biography resembles Herbert Blumer's notion of a 'sensitizing concept' (Blumer, 1954). It thus functions as a tentative, provisional and strategic guide to open up further inquiry. To conclude, this sensitizing concept is a result of an abductive dialogue between the narratives of the informants and outside concepts; it does not serve to represent immigrants as a collective, to settle causal relations, or to tell the Truth about actual individuals or their life-stories.

## THE UTOPIAN DIASPORA BIOGRAPHY

Dijedon, like Nadia and Djamel, was born abroad, under rather traditional and spartan circumstances. He lived with his family in Kosovo in a Muslim village on the countryside. Everybody knew each other and most of them were relatives. Education had a very high symbolic value and people with a university education were respected and admired. In the utopian diaspora biography this admiration of education remains intact over time and education is thus associated with high status, increased life chances and social integration. Education is regarded as a central investment and closely connected to notions of modernisation and development. Nadia's narrative is one example of this outlook.

Nadia: Education is very important in my family. My parents have always seen education as forming the basis for the future life. They have always pointed out that 'without education you are nothing'.

The child's parents might be well educated, like Nadia's, but not necessarily. Narratives on education can also be about refusal; Dijedon's father, forced by the early death of his parents, had to earn his living by working from an early age and did therefore not have the opportunity to enter formal education. Dijedon: 'He often says, I wish I was at your age and were given these opportunities...' A substantial part of Dijedon's narrative is thus about fulfilling the possibilities denied his father.

These individuals had experiences from school in their native country. Schooling was characterised by nationalism, hard discipline, and sometimes even corporal punishment.

Joakim: So you are saying that the school was tough?

Dijedon: Yes, it was tough...

Joakim: Rougher than at your home?

Dijedon: Yes, so rough that my father had to come to the school and tell the teacher that that it had to stop.

Joakim: What was it that had to stop?

Dijedon: We were flogged because we were dirty and so on...My father told the teacher:

‘In the school your task is to educate, I take care of the upbringing at home’.

When such children were admitted to a Swedish school, they found it fun, friendly, fair, and child-oriented. Nadia: ‘In Bosnia everything is assessed through grading. It is a completely different perspective; everything shall be measured, everything that you know shall be measured. Here it is more about personal development’. Using the terminology of Basil Bernstein (1975) one might say that the immigration implies a movement from a ‘visible’ to an ‘invisible’ pedagogy<sup>5</sup>. In the utopian diaspora biography this movement between different traditions, or *regimes*, of schooling and socialization might create problems (see below), but it might also produce forms of advantage concerning meaning, motivation and legitimation in relation to learning processes and education.

## **Social and spatial mobility**

When families are forced to leave their native country due to escalating civil war or political persecution, they seek asylum as exiles. But the flight to Sweden is also a conscious, active search for freedom, peace and democracy. As such, the utopian diaspora biography is based on a social imaginary congruent with the modernist salvation stories that have served to legitimize educational systems around the world (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004). These are the imaginaries circulated by policies and research since the 19th century; stories of future promises, of democracy, equality and social mobility; of ‘finding the better life’ and about ‘fulfilling one’s own and national destiny, and joining of the progress and development of the individual with collective hopes and desires of the nation’ (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004: 71). When the families of Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel organised their escapes such salvation stories did not describe something present. On the contrary the distant Sweden represented part of their spatial utopia.

The families eventually settled in a segregated suburb among fellow countrymen. These areas are most often products of the so called ‘million programme’, a modernist housing programme launched in the mid 1960s promising social mobility via geographical mobility (Ristilammi, 1994). Contrary to the initial political ambition, these housing areas were quickly transformed into stigmatized places associated with social problems and eventually the otherness associated with ethnicity. The socio-spatial experience of the families proved to be complex since it contrasted with views of Sweden as a safe, fair and democratic welfare state where everyone has the right to vote, to receive public health care and to benefit from a high-quality public education system. In Sweden, so they were led to believe, everyone can become what they want if they work hard. In Sweden, to quote the Swedish author and

biographer Mustafa Can, ‘time appear[s] as rich as the country’ (Can, 2006: 15, my translation). Accordingly, ‘subjective’ life chances are raised and, among non-academic parents, explicit expectations of social mobility are generated. At the same time the families of Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel gradually had to confront problems of social exclusion, segregation and discrimination. Their parents were excluded from the core labour market, surviving on temporary and unqualified work. Their housing proved to be a ‘catastrophe’ or a ‘dirty ghetto’ (Djamel). Their spatial utopia was turned upside down. The good place and the good life remained somewhere else. Nevertheless, in their stigmatized home area the school stood out as a kind of asylum that also represents a ticket to ride. ‘You have to get away from there, you must not get stuck’ (Nadia).

### **Responsibility, social control and legitimation**

Such children often hear stories from the home country. If conditions are safe, the child might also visit the environment in which s/he has grown up. The presence, in such stories, of ethnic conflicts, persecution, war, and human suffering evoke complex feelings that somehow seem to transcend traditional notions of gratitude and guilt.

Joakim: Do you often think about the flight?

Dijedon: Yes, I do.

Joakim: How does it feel when you think about it? Do you feel lucky or...

Dijedon: (Pause) I see it as destiny. I don’t know about luck and misfortune... It might also be a misfortune that I got here, that I did not get to be a part of it [the Kosovo war of 1999]. Not that it is anything good (pause) but it is still a part of life that some get to experience and others don’t.

Joakim: Do you feel like you have been lucky on their behalf?

Dijedon: Well. If you talk about luck it is like ‘good that they died and not me’. Almost as if I were glad that they died...after all these are friends and relatives. They got killed in the house where I was raised. That house is burnt to the ground so when I walk there I think that I just as well could have been among them. That being so it does not feel good to call it luck, because it is their misfortune...or destiny.

This aspect of biography fosters a sense of responsibility towards friends and relatives who has been left behind, and towards parents who has had to give up their old lives and careers. The obligation to make something out of one’s life is also strengthened by feelings of gratitude and guilt towards the receiving country, Sweden, that are projected on to the child via their parents.

Djamel: Things that my father has gone through has affected us all. (...) My father used to say to us children: ‘We have escaped from all that [political persecution] and now we shall be successful. We have come to a country that has helped us. We shall educate ourselves in order to give something in return, you shall get jobs, pay taxes, pay back. We have received so much, we shall also give something in return’.

As pointed out by de los Reyes & Mulinari the diaspora condition ‘enforces particular codes of conduct and strategies of adaptation’ (2005: 120, my translation). To be an immigrant, a stranger, means that you have to legitimize your presence – ‘to prove your innocence’ (de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2005: 120). By emphasizing this ‘emulative’ (Tilly, 1998) aspect of the diaspora’s circumstances, it is possible to establish a non-essentialist understanding of the fact that family members, most often the father, are exercising strong social control. Such emulation is a product of the diaspora condition, and not a cultural disposition of certain individuals. This family socialisation, however, is based on a modern conception of authority and legitimation.

Djamel: My father never bought any Nintendo or Gameboy, it was school, school, school... I was not allowed to play [such games]: ‘Either you work or you study’. (...) Even if I had finished my home work and done well at the test I was not allowed to go out and play sometimes. He was hard. (...) His thoughts were kind, but I was a young child, I wanted to go out. But maybe he has helped me. Maybe I would be ‘doing time’ [in prison] right now if he would not have been this way, you never know. I am grateful, but I also wanted to grow up and have a childhood.

The experiences of family socialisation was also given meaning in comparison to experiences of schooling.

Joakim: Were there any differences between your home and the school regarding norms?

Nadia: At home you have to be perfect because they see you all the time. In Bosnia you had to behave the same way in school as at home, behave very well. Here [in Sweden] teachers do not care as much, you could do whatever you felt like doing, but I tried to stick with my family values [regarding conscientious conduct].

While the family is often demanding and raises high standards concerning school results and grades, children seldom ask their parents to help them with homework from school. ‘I did not want to burden them with my homework, they had their own problems’ Dijedon explained. Thus, children are often left alone to organise their learning in an increasingly individualistic school system. This overall situation might foster responsibility and independence. But it also has a potential of hurting the family relations and incur individual pain. Bernstein (1975: 40-42) has described a similar situation where the family – most often an ‘aspiring working class family’ – accepts the ends of schooling, but has little or no understanding of the means used to transmit it. ‘The family wants the child to pass examination, to get a good job, and also to conform to a standard of conduct often different from the one the family possesses....For such a family, the procedures of the school are often a closed book’. Bernstein (1975: 42) raised questions that are appropriate to the diaspora condition: ‘What must it be like to be a parent if you are insulated from your child in this way? What must it be like to be a child unable to share his school experience with his family?’.

## **Adaptation, goal-orientation and then what?**

However, the complex experiences of the utopian diaspora have promoted the ability of the child to adapt to new circumstances and s/he therefore learns to (or is forced to) cope with this difficult situation. Dijedon, who at the age of eight year had attended six different school classes, explains that: 'My whole life has been about adaptation. If I've not succeeded in adapting I have managed to make it by my own anyway'. The child, therefore, accepts different pedagogical environments, ideas and practices subordinate to her/his/the family's overall aims. These aims are developed as an integrated part of the biography, constructing continuity between the past and the future. From an early age life is seen as a ladder or career where different rungs in the educational system are continuously identified and reached.

Work plans are another example where former experiences take part in moulding the biography. Nadia who fled the Bosnian war would like to work in international law solving conflicts.

Joakim: How have these experiences of war affected you?

Nadia: Much of it pushes me to study law. (...) I think about genocide, about crime and punishment. That's why I started studying. I felt that this is not the way it is supposed to be. It feels like we spoke about this at home all the time. It was a constantly recurrent theme – war, war, war. Always present.

Dijedon first wanted to become an architect in order to help re-building his home country (his own home, built by his father, was totally demolished during the war). Constructing, says Dijedon, means that you 'leave something concrete behind'. Eventually, however, he had to adjust his plans due to 'poor grades in mathematics'. He is now a trained camera man and dreams about making documentaries as a way of expressing and dealing with his memories. Returning to Kosovo Dijedon has used his camera in search for lost friends and lost places: 'To construct memories is what life is all about, in a way', he explains. This mode of biographical planning and experience contradicts assumptions about 'de-temporalized' biographies that are not oriented 'along a line that stretches from the past into the future' but, instead, focus merely to the present (Leccardi, 2005: 141, see also Vinken, 2007).

Overall work plans tend to be ambitious and either include social mobility or recapturing of the social position that parents held in the home country. At times work plans have to be re-defined. Djamel, who was a very successful student in the segregated compulsory school, applied to an upper secondary school with high status<sup>6</sup>. He soon found himself isolated from the other middleclass students. He also 'found out that he was not such a talented student', at least in comparison to his new classmates. After a couple of attempts to change school he felt obliged to quit, choosing to join his brother's business. When I interviewed Djamel, he picked me up in his exclusive German car. His new computer shop is doing well and he enjoys work. But he is not really accepted by his father who finds Djamel's life-style vulgar and his work lacking in qualifications.



Joakim: Your father must be proud of you now. Your business is doing well...

Djamel: No, he is not proud (laugh). He wants education. He says: 'It doesn't matter how much money you earn, you can earn millions, but if you don't have any education you are not worth anything in my eyes. If I put you next to a doctor without any money in his pockets, he is worth more in my eyes. (pause). He says that educated people interact with society in a better way.

Djamel often thinks about this and about what could have happened if he had been given a chance to transfer to another upper secondary school. Although he does not fully agree with his father, he says that education is important because it 'makes you talk and think in another way'. This utopian aspect of diaspora biographies makes them very fragile. They are exposed to obstacles and resistance that tend to increase over time. Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel all have friends who have given up due to difficulties or discrimination in the education or labour market. Among their classmates from compulsory school, 35 percent received social allowance during 2006 and another 17 percent were registered as long term unemployed after being without work for more than 100 days (Lindgren, under review).

Nadia [On the possibilities of realizing life plans on education and labour]: Some friends have the feeling that it is completely impossible. 'There is no point in trying. I don't give a shit about this anymore. I'm going to my home country...' But many of them are still struggling. That is the obstacle I see as well, that I am still a foreigner here in Sweden. I think that it might have an effect...that everybody checks your last name before they check your grades and everything...I hope not, but it might be that way.

As for now I will leave Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel. In the following section I will bring the above problematic that links diaspora biography, utopian projections and cultural mediation into contact with Ricoeur's (1986) thoughts on ideology and utopia. My suggestion is that Ricoeur's ideas on ideology and utopia can be used to understand the ambitious (or even 'unrealistic') objectives concerning education and labour expressed by immigrant students in Swedish compulsory education. Ricoeur has a dialectical, both/and perspective that sees individual dreams of a better future as conflated with *both* social change *and* structural power and control.

## **IDEOLOGY AND UTOPIA**

For Ricoeur ideology and utopia<sup>7</sup> are complementary collective stories and histories. They typify social imagination and are integrated into modes of self-understanding and action in a community: 'Ideology and utopia have ultimately to do with the character of human action as being mediated, structured and integrated by symbolic systems' (Ricoeur, 1976: 21).

Marx introduced the complex notion of how individuals and material conditions are conjoined in real life and how this real life produces 'echoes' and 'reflexes' – a distorted imaginary identified as ideology. One of the crucial dimensions of ideology concerns how power relations are reproduced with a minimum resort to direct coercion. Ricoeur acknowledges Marx, but chooses to place ideology within a motivational framework where

conflicts between power's claim to legitimacy and individuals' belief in legitimacy constitute *'a system of motivation that proceeds from the lack of a clear distinction between the real and the unreal'* (Ricoeur, 1986: 137, emphasis added). The objective of ideology – to legitimate the order or authority of power – is thereby understood as an 'organic relation' (Ricoeur, 2005: 124) between ruler and ruled.

On a basic level, however, the function of ideology is to promote collective images which integrate communities and individuals around a shared identity and thus serve to preserve and conserve. Ideology hence plays two different roles in a community; the basic or primitive role of integration and the distortion of thought by interest (Ricoeur, 1986: 12). Whereas ideology is always connected to the present situation utopia is 'the glance from nowhere' (Ricoeur, 1986: 266) which works in the opposite direction advancing novelty, rupture and discontinuity and by projecting alternatives to the existing order. Utopian imagination is a fundamental prerequisite for societies and their individuals. The current late-modern situation is thus a serious threat. There is, says Ricoeur, a 'loss of total perspective resulting from the disappearance of utopia' (Ricoeur, 1986: 180). And, continues Ricoeur, a society without utopia would be a dead society, 'because there would be no distance, no ideals, no project at all' (Ricoeur, 1986: 180).

Imbalanced or cut off from one another, ideology and utopia run the risk of pathological extremes. Ideology has the potential of imprisoning subjects in reactionary conservatism or fatalism while utopia might sacrifice subjects to an unrealistic or even schizophrenic image of an abstract future without the conditions for its realisation. Accordingly, I suggest that the diaspora condition implies a spatial, social and temporal movement between slightly different internal systems of ideology and utopia – between a modern, Fordist system and a late modern, post-Fordist one.

## DISCUSSION

In this paper I have explored ambitious future orientations and life plans of immigrant youth from a disadvantaged Swedish city area using a biographical perspective. The tentative concept utopian diaspora biography describes a process where aspirations are accumulated as a consequence of the social, temporal and spatial dynamic of the biography. I have suggested that such biographies are characterised by a traditional and strong legitimisation of authority and a modern conception of time and future possibilities that are eventually placed in a late modern context with somewhat different ideological content. The complex diaspora experience aggregates profound feelings of hope, gratitude and guilt as well as an unusual course of meaning and motivation which becomes part of the evolving identity. This process might be painful, insecure, and demanding, but I argue that it might foster a disposition or a capital that can interact with, or compensate for the absence of, assets of economic, social and cultural capital (cf. Bourdieu, 1986). The utopian diaspora biography – with its potentials, risks, and problems – is not to be understood as an individual project. It is, to paraphrase Ronny Ambjörnsson (1996), a process launched by factors beyond individual control, a form of destiny adherent to a social, temporal, and spatial dialectic between slightly different systems of ideology and utopia. Yet, as lived reality the utopian diaspora biography is

individually conceived and dealt with. This has been a challenge for Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel, but perhaps even more so for the majority of young immigrants in Sweden that share their utopian dreams, but not their relative success in realizing them. This is one important aspect of the lives of diasporic youth that warrants further exploration.

As mentioned above, these biographies are framed by multiple forms of social exclusion. The most basic, integrative function of ideology is hence not realised. For example, this means that the social imaginary is not fully integrated with the symbolic praxis of education and working life in Sweden. This situation leads to problems associated with efforts to understand, decode or unmask authority's claims. By the same token, the efficiency of the other, legitimative function of ideology is promoted. Based on a 'lack of a clear distinction between the real and the unreal' (Ricoeur, 1986: 137) ideology here works as a system of motivation. In a context characterized by severe inter-generational social exclusion, problems of legitimacy in relation to education and labour would normally appear. But in the spatial movement between the slightly different symbolic systems it appears as if the legitimating function of ideology is boosted. Using the Marxist concept of surplus-value, Ricoeur provides a tentative explanation of how power works by filling credibility gaps in systems of authority. Ideology, says Ricoeur, works through adding a surplus-value to the belief of individuals in order that their belief may meet the requirements of the authority's claim (Ricoeur, 1986: 183). This 'Mehrwert' is 'not necessarily intrinsic to the structure of production' in the single symbolic system, but to 'the structure of power' in the nexus of the symbolic systems of integration and legitimation (Ricoeur, 1986: 14). The process of social control associated with the legitimation of meritocratic individual agency is hence not only a matter of the local national education and labour market; it must be understood in the context of globalization. The notion of transition regimes might complement this discussion. A preliminary conclusion is that certain diasporic youth may be particularly sensitive towards claims on their individual development in the Swedish regime. The fact is that on the level of identity, utopian diaspora biographies imply an overheating of individual goals related to education and work while the picture of who the individual is in relation to these goals is blurred by means of ideological distortion. This fetishism of life chances clearly harbours elements of symbolic violence and this is especially true for individuals who blame themselves for not realizing their dreams.

When immigrant pupils are struggling with utopian projects they hence engage in (re)producing crucial aspects of the universalistic regime as a social space. When realised, these projects (re)produce ideological notions of social mobility and meritocratic individual agency, which are notions in tune with current political discourses on social inclusion, life long learning and employability. Somewhat paradoxically, successful projects hence take part in the (re)production of certain norms and ideals which serve to (re)produce social inequality and social exclusion. Successful utopian diaspora biographies define the unmotivated, undetermined and not so active, independent individual. Returning to Ricoeur this means that the original or 'real' relations between ideology and utopia are reversed. The utopian project inherent in such biographies actually promotes ideology on the societal level. Thus in contrast to intern (or 'real') utopian projects this form fails to challenge the existing social order. The subversive potential of utopian thinking is transformed in the flux between the two systems of every-day ideology and utopia as ideology. These diasporic biographies poses a threat to the

dominant culture only when the social integration is not successful and the immigrant young people, despite being motivated and hard working, do not manage to realise their utopian dreams. Failed or disrupted biographies might turn into lives of social exclusion – criminalisation, drug abuse and above all – its pure ideological form – religious and cultural re-ethnisation (Skrobanek, 2006). In the post 9/11 context, terrorism offers an illusive phantasmagoria, the antithesis of social inclusion (cf. Ranstorp & Dos Santos, 2009). Paradoxically, then, it is the ideological potential of utopian diaspora biographies that is the most threatening to the ideology of the dominant culture.

But make no mistake, Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel did not have any such political programme. They are just struggling against the grain to realise their dreams. And maybe this is the sole import of utopian diaspora biographies. They may not challenge the present hegemonic power, but they may challenge hierarchical structures in education or the labour market. They may not provide or preserve any safe identity, but they may explore ‘the lateral possibilities of reality’ (Ruyer in Ricoeur, 1986: 310). For that reason one might argue that Nadia, Dijedon and Djamel duly take their part in shaping the New Sweden.

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## Notes

1. The starting point in this paper is that relations between 'school success' and family background cannot be understood with reference to substantialist concepts like 'ethnicity' (Bourdieu, 1995). Such concepts hide, for example, how time spent in the new country has implications for the development of language and thus creates differences among individuals of heterogeneous national collectives. In segregated communities 'language problems' (which is a somewhat paradoxical term used to describe individuals with multi-lingual competencies) are difficult to overcome in school. Instead young people often learn certain forms of local and stigmatizing sociolects that stand in extreme opposition to the language and style, the 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990 p. 73), that is normally valued in the education system. In an international perspective the 'Social democratic' welfare state of Sweden stands out as an example where intergenerational social mobility is comparatively high. Access to post-secondary education and occupational opportunities are not determined by social origin as much as in corporatist (Germany and France) or liberal (United Kingdom and United States of America) welfare states (cf. Beller & Hout, 2006; Blanden, Gregg & Machin, 2005).
2. All names of individuals and places are fabricated.
3. The paper is a part of a project dealing with experiences and notions of education and social inclusion/exclusion among young people in three different Swedish communities – a rural area, an urban advantaged segregated area and an urban disadvantaged segregated area. In a questionnaire study in the three different areas in January 2000 (Lindgren, 2003) students from Nadia's, Dijedon's and Djamel's school classes displayed the most positive attitudes towards education and their own possibilities of succeeding in school and life. More than students in the other areas they claimed to work hard and that everyone could succeed at school if s/he tried hard.
4. Olof Palme, future Prime Minister of Sweden, public speech, 1962.
5. Visible and invisible pedagogy are concepts that draw on Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity. The latter describes a form of pedagogy characterized by implicit (and de-centred) control, child orientation and multiple and diffuse biographical evaluations (Bernstein, 1975: 116– 145).
6. These young people were the first generation in this city who applied to the different upper secondary programs based on their grades and not on their geographical place of residence. This led to a new situation as students from different compulsory schools, with different social backgrounds, became mixed in a new way.
7. Karl Mannheim (1976, originally published in 1929) was the first scholar who discussed ideology and utopia within a common framework.

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**JOAKIM LINDGREN** is a doctoral student at the Department of Education, Umeå University. The main focus of his research is relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion of youth. The most recent publication is "Great location, beautiful surroundings!" – Making sense of information materials intended as guidance for school choice, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* (in press), co-written with Mattias Johnsson. Address: Department of Education, Umeå university, 901 87 Umeå, Sweden. Phone 46 (0)90 7866447 [email: joakim.lindgren@pedag.umu.se]







# Spaces of social inclusion and exclusion

## A spatial approach to education restructuring and identity in Sweden

Joakim Lindgren\*

### Abstract

The decentralised Swedish school system has become increasingly directed to the construction of self-governing and responsible pedagogic identities that are supposed to enable integration and participation. Drawing on the work of the geographer Edward W. Soja, I acknowledge how material and symbolic spatialisation intersect with the local production of included and excluded identities in the context of restructuring education. The paper is based on a study in two areas in a segregated Swedish city; one disadvantaged and one advantaged area. I use a wide range of data such as policy documents, questionnaire data, longitudinal statistics, interviews with local politicians, school actors and former students. The findings show that former students from the disadvantaged area were more often excluded from further education and were dependent on social welfare to a higher extent. Moreover, they faced low expectations and were simultaneously excluded from new educational processes that explicitly aim at social inclusion. In the paper I discuss how ethical ideals of decentralisation and participation, and the evaluation of such policies in terms of access to further education and work, conceal the local production of excluded identities. This production, I argue, is based on an amalgamation of material conditions and spatial representations.

**Keywords:** education restructuring, identity, locality, social exclusion, space

### Introduction

“What is required, therefore, is an interrogation of the relationships between the production of space and the construction of identity” (*John Paul Jones III & Pamela Moss, 1995, p. 256*).

“[S]ubjects do not make places, but, in a sense, *are* places” (*Thrift, 1991, p. 462*).

This paper concerns the relationships between education restructuring, locality and the social inclusion and exclusion of youth in two segregated<sup>1</sup> areas in a Swedish city – one a segregated middle class area and the other a poor and ethnically segregated area. The notion of restructuring is used to discuss policy change in a broad and practical sense including local interpretations, outcomes, consequences as well as the ordering principles of policy. Policy is thus simultaneously seen as text, and

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\* Department of Education, Umeå University, Sweden. E-mail: joakim.lindgren@pedag.umu.se

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a discursive and social practice (cf. Ball 1994). In the paper I draw attention to how policies on decentralisation and increased local freedom work together with – and against – policy ideas about schooling as the construction of specific identities that qualify and disqualify individuals for participation.

Since the late 1990s, large geographical variations have emerged concerning school results and the subsequent transition to further and higher education in Sweden (Swedish National Agency for Education 2009). In turn, these are associated with the social, economic and ethnic composition of the immediate surroundings. In so-called ‘areas of social exclusion’ in Swedish cities there are schools where less than 50 percent of the students leave compulsory schooling with a school leaving certificate. These areas are also associated with high unemployment, such that more than 30 percent of young people aged between 20–25 neither work nor study (Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs 2008). In light of these figures, researchers have begun to raise questions about ‘site’ or ‘neighbourhood’ effects. Here, I join this discussion. My aim is to consider how policy can interact with the local social production of particular included and excluded identities. In order to do this, I draw on the geographer Edward W. Soja’s (1989; 1996; 2000) transdisciplinary theory of human historicity, sociality and spatiality.

### ***Education restructuring and the emergence of new spaces and identities***

In an international perspective, Sweden has been described as a social-democratic welfare regime (Esping Andersen, 1990) or universalistic welfare regime (Gallie & Paugam, 2000). In these welfare-state narratives, Swedish institutional settings and cultures are described in terms of social justice, generous welfare solutions, low unemployment and consequently high levels of social inclusion. Education has been at the centre of these narratives. From the 1940s to the 1970s, education was seen as “a spearhead into the future” and regarded as a “social and citizenship right promoting *public and collective good*...equality and equity...social inclusion and democratic participation” (Aasen, 2003, p. 111, emphasis added). For these reasons involving education, Sweden has also been described as a “universalistic transition regime” (Walther, 2006). As a transition regime, Sweden is built on a comprehensive school system where relatively high percentages of pupils are expected to make the transition to post-compulsory levels. Indeed, around 80 percent of school leavers complete national programmes and acquire certification that gives them access to higher education (Walther, 2006)<sup>2</sup>.

However, there is also another narrative concerning Sweden. It derives from an internal rather than an international perspective (see, for example, Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006; Johannesson, Lindblad & Simola, 2002; Lundahl, 2002; Aasen, 2003). It is based on the claim that the Swedish welfare state, including its education system, has undergone significant change in the wake of the international, even global,

spread of ideas about marketisation, deregulation, decentralisation, accountability, goal steering, effectiveness, competition, economic downsizing, individualism, and freedom of choice (cf. Ball, Goodson & Maguire, 2007). These internal changes have also been a response to episodes of national economic recession in Sweden in the early 1990s. Pressure on public funds led to greater attention being paid to new forms of organisation that would give greater value for money – by, for instance, regarding education as a private rather than a public good and, in turn, allowing schools to compete with each other to gain a share of the educational market and its credit-bearing customers. Thus, it has been claimed that education restructuring not only presented “opportunities for financial cuts” but also for “the acceptance of differences between schools and regions” (Lindblad et al., 2002).

Overall, the restructuring of the welfare state served to introduce a new balance between the state and the individual. This restructuring called for a new kind of individual, a citizen who could participate in and reproduce these new marketised relations. This new state telos envisages (a) the creation of free individuals with sufficient responsibility and self-sufficiency that they (b) become active and adjustable job seekers who, at the same time, regard themselves as (c) lifelong learners who can vigorously strengthen their autonomy from the state. According to Olson (2008), education policy change during the 1990s in fact meant a fundamental redefinition of citizenship in Sweden – from the traditional nation-builder to the present mobile, self-determinate and self-realising market nomadic.

This production of responsible and self-regulative identities became central to education restructuring in Sweden (Lindblad et al., 2002; Dovermark, 2004). The current national curriculum, for instance, indicates that “[b]y participating in the planning and evaluation of their daily education, and exercising choices over courses, subjects, themes and activities, pupils will develop their ability to exercise influence and take responsibility” (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 5). Further, it is assumed that the practices of self-government shall “prepare pupils for active participation in civic life” (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 5). Such practices of individualisation tend to privilege students with a non-working class background (Bernstein, 2000; Arnot & Reay, 2004; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2009). Overall, they support the overall transformation of society in terms of an increased stress on individual responsibility (Carlgren et al., 2006). Moreover, they alter and intensify notions about young people, who they are and how they ought to be (Lindgren, 2007). Overall, they exemplify a “shift from governing practices related to the formation of collective social projects to contemporary projects that focus on cultural identities” (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 167; cf. Frykman, 1998).

These changing policies have been important aspects of education restructuring during the last decade. Another aspect relates to new policies on social *equivalence*. Equivalence tends to be discussed, compared and evaluated by focusing on measurable aspects of education, such as grades, and the transition from compulsory schooling

to upper secondary, gymnasium education. Such statistical data enable comparisons between localities, schools and categories of students. In the period before the 1990s access to education was most often related to social class, but since then the focus of statistics has shifted to categories based on ethnicity and gender. During much of the 20th century Swedish education was regulated by the state which secured national equality in terms of the costs, quality, content and results of compulsory education. In the late 1980s policies started to call for decentralisation, local solutions and individualisation. With reference to differences in terms of students' abilities and interests, an increase in the sovereignty of the family as a consumer was called for (Englund, 2005). The curriculum introduced in 1994 opened up to allow greater variations in school:

National goals specify the norms for equivalence. However, equivalent education does not mean that the education should be the same everywhere or that the resources of the school shall be allocated equally. Account should also be taken of the varying circumstances and needs of pupils as well as the fact that there are a variety of ways of attaining these goals. (...) For this reason education can never be the same for all (*Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 4*).

At the close of the 20th century 'equivalence' no longer referred to 'equal' schooling in the traditional sense. Instead, it referred to local diversity, individual freedom of choice and opportunities for individual development (Englund, 2005). According to Arnesen and Lundahl (2006, p. 296), this change related to a fundamental redefinition of education policies:

Equality and uniformity are gradually replaced by diversity and (...) increasing school segregation and growing performance-related differences between pupils and schools. Individual agency replaces collective and political action. Social and equality goals tend to be superseded by fostering self-regulating, rational and flexible learners.

In the late 1990s statistics started to show dramatic differences between schools regarding student performance (SOU 2000: 39; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2006). The situation was particularly problematic in poor and ethnically-segregated areas. The language of social exclusion was introduced as a response to this overall situation. It provided a new way to describe, understand and address questions of poverty and structural inequality. Following international interpretations, it constructed problems primarily in terms of a lack of education and work, while establishing a new social distinction between those who are included and those who are excluded. It was presumed that excluded individuals lacked responsibility, possibilities, opportunities, motivation, engagement and ambition (SOU 1995: 76; Gov. bill 1997/98: 165; Government bill 2007/08:1). By local mobilisation from below, raising individual opportunities and emphasising the individual responsibilities of targeted groups in targeted areas, it was assumed that inclusion would be realised (Dahlstedt, 2006).



To sum up: the Swedish education system has traditionally aimed at achieving equality and participation as a collective social project. Over time, social-inclusive aspects of schooling have become more and more decentralised, individualised and, in addition, focused on the construction and evaluation of individuals and their capacities. At the same time, differences between, on one hand, school results and school practices and, on the other, the social structure of localities increased. Although official statistics frequently map out social exclusion in terms of access to education and work, there is little research about these relations from a perspective that acknowledges how education restructuring intersects with the local production of included and excluded identities. This paper starts to explore the interweaving process of local inequalities and identity formation in two environments that exemplify socio-spatial differences in Sweden: Garden<sup>3</sup> and Park.

## **Methodology**

Garden and Park are two city areas. The former is a disadvantaged segregated area – known as an ‘area of social exclusion’. The latter is an advantaged segregated middle-class area. These areas were chosen since they had the greatest differences in average incomes, share of welfare recipients and degree of unemployment in this city. Both sites were investigated between 1997 and 2000, and again in 2007–2008. A questionnaire study (N = 150) conducted in 2000 explored attitudes on education, educational identity, self-evaluation, personal plans and expectations, future orientation, and factors leading to social exclusion among 9th grade students – aged around 15 – in one school in each area. The students belonged to a generation of young people born in 1984 who started compulsory school in 1991. In Garden, special preparation classes for newly arrived immigrants were excluded from the study because of language obstacles, while the other case (Park) is based on a representative population. I also draw on interviews with local politicians (N = 12) and school actors (N = 47) from the two sites<sup>4</sup>. These were conducted in 1998 and 1999 and focused on education restructuring, discursive constructions of identities, and social inclusion and exclusion. In 2007 and 2008 I conducted interviews with a small sample of former students (N = 7) from the school classes that took part in the original questionnaire study. These interviews used a biographical perspective and focused on identity, local conditions, education and social inclusion/exclusion.

In this paper, I also draw on statistical data describing patterns of social inclusion and exclusion among all the students from the school classes who answered the questionnaire. I use official data regarding transitions to upper secondary education (National Agency of Education) and exclusive longitudinal data from Statistics Sweden regarding transitions to university, unemployment and social welfare (N = 196). Finally, additional data were gleaned from field observation, national and local reports, policy documents, statistics, reports of the Swedish National Agency of Education, and data provided by the schools and their websites. This mixed-method approach

was inspired by life history studies where biographical interviews are complemented by other contextual data in order to understand the “social geographies in which life stories are embedded” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 17). All together, this body of data makes it possible to explore how local implementations of education policy change have manifested themselves in the lives of young people who are today trying to make the transition to further education and work.

I position myself as a social constructionist interested in the ‘discovery’ of new meaning in a hermeneutic sense. A theoretical framework inspired by the geographer Edward W. Soja (1996; 2000) informs the tentative analysis and the representation of data. I identify and elaborate selectively on those general themes that foster an understanding of the relationship between education restructuring and the consequent local production of social inclusion and exclusion. Overall, the theoretical approach is heuristic inasmuch as I try to use a geographical theory in order to explore an educational problematic.

### **Edward W. Soja’s trialectics of space**

A growing body of international research in the field of education policy sociology draws on spatial theories (cf. Gulson & Symes, 2007a; 2007b; Usher, 2002; Peters & Kessl, 2009). Various, these studies have explored the relationship between space, neoliberalism and identity (e.g. Gulson, 2005; 2007; 2008). The starting point is that space (or place) is central to understanding social relationships, social becoming, experience, imagination and memory – that space, therefore, is “profoundly pedagogical” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 621). Space has also been used as a metaphor in order to explore the spatial politics of educational reform. For example, Popkewitz (1997; 1998) argues that pupils today inhabit, or are located, in discursive spaces that map out their personality and capacities. In this respect, education functions “as a map in that it organizes the territories of membership by producing boundaries between the members and non-members” (Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg, 1999, p. 19).

Some of these educational studies have been inspired by Soja’s work. Soja’s starting point is ontological. Using the ideas historicity, sociality and spatiality, he offers both a picture of human existence and a statement that guides the search for practical knowledge and understanding (Soja, 1996). Inspired by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991), Soja’s epistemology uses another sense of three-ness. His “spatial trialectics” includes three overlapping perspectives: “Firstspace”, “Secondspace” and “Thirdspace”.

Firstspace refers to common material, measurable and mappable spatial practices “that work together to produce and reproduce the concrete forms and specific patterns of urbanism as a way of life” (Soja, 2000, p. 10). Typically, Firstspace comprises statistical information on local conditions that allows comparisons over time and the hierarchisation of milieus, things, activities and groups of individuals. Looking at Garden from this perspective we discern an extremely poor milieu with a high proportion

of unemployed people who are dependent upon social welfare payments. In addition, Garden is dominated by blocks of flats, a large shopping centre in the middle, and orbital main roads. The area was built in the late 1960s as part of the modernist social democratic housing project called the 'million programme'. Despite these inclusive political aims, the area quickly turned into a socio-economically segregated area. During the 1990s large groups of refugees settled there, accentuating patterns of ethnic segregation. In the aftermath of the recession in the early 1990s, more than 60 percent of the population between 20 and 64 years lived on social welfare; and more than 50 percent of the inhabitants were categorised as poor<sup>5</sup>. In spite of numerous national and local interventions the overall situation in Garden has not changed. At the time of writing (2009), over 100 nationalities are represented and around 60 percent are immigrants with both parents born abroad. Less than 40 percent of the population (between 20-64 years old) is gainfully employed. In general, the inhabitants of Garden are poor, sick and living in confined and shabby quarters.

This contrasts with Park, the wealthiest area in the city. Here we find high house prices, little unemployment, rare recipients of social security and high levels of education and income. Since the mid-1990s unemployment has been below five percent. Half of the population (between 20-64 years old) has enjoyed a post-upper secondary education and the income per individual is about twice as high as in Garden.

Secondspace refers to a more mental, ideational and imaginary field that is conceptualised in "reflexive thought, and symbolic representation, a conceived space of the imagination" (Soja, 2000, p. 11). Whereas Firstspace tend to focus on experiences and 'objective' material aspects or 'things', Secondspace is more 'subjective' and thus related to how we think about space. Soja (2000, p. 11) identifies representations as intrinsic to our experience of space. They are ways of perceiving reality which shape our experience, behaviour, expectations and time conceptions. Secondspace, therefore, identifies how official statistics, urban planning and research – not to mention mass media reports on different areas and regions – serve as a discourse which produces and reproduces ideological patterns of difference, including subordination and dominance. For example, Garden has often featured in media reports on crime, violence and social exclusion. In my interviews, some of the former students from Garden described their home area as a ghetto-like dystopia while informants from Park generally spoke about a child-friendly and pleasant ideal. Garden is hence associated with a social stigma, whereas coming from Park is regarded as having a superior symbolic value. The stigmatisation of Garden is closely connected to notions of race and ethnicity. Hana, a Lebanese student who has lived in the area since the late 1980s, described the decay of the area by reference to the decreasing percentage of ethnic Swedes. Somewhat paradoxically, Garden simultaneously functions as a spatial utopia for individuals who have escaped war and political persecution seeking a new and better life in Sweden (Lindgren in press). Spatial imagination in Garden has also involved conceptions of positive subjectivities being produced, or *renovated* (Gulson, 2005),

by the visions, ideals or objectives associated with national or local policies such as social inclusion, economic growth or educational attainment.

Finally, Thirdspace refers to an alternative – or higher – way of thinking which incorporates both of the former perspectives and their deconstruction. This perspective, for instance, subjects the materialities and imaginaries of First- and Secondspace to further scrutiny. Thus, socio-spatial features can be re-analysed, not in terms of physical distance, but social distance; or human practices can be re-analysed in terms not of culture but power (cf. Green & Letts, 2007, p. 65). Thirdspace, therefore, allows an intersectional analysis of structural inequalities, subordination, discursive power, and stigmatisation (cf. Green and Letts, 2007). Overall, Soja's framework makes it possible to acknowledge and contrast complementary perspectives on education restructuring and the associated social inclusion and exclusion (cf. Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg, 1999). The following outlines how Garden and Park may be understood as examples of Firstspace, Secondspace and Thirdspace.

## **Firstspace**

Firstspace concerns the more concrete, directly comprehended and empirically measurable aspects of human life. I suggest that this analysis is read at two different levels. Drawing on interviews with local politicians, school actors and former students I will present local responses to education policies as well as aspects of local cultures, practices and experiences in the schools that have implications for the formation of identities. I shall also present statistical patterns of social inclusion and exclusion in the two sites by using traditional measures like grades and transitions to further education, unemployment, social allowance and the civil economy<sup>6</sup>.

At the close of the last millennium, the local compulsory education market in this city was still organised in accordance with the 'nearness principle', which meant that students went to school in their own neighbourhoods. These local conditions were therefore reflected in the social structures of the two schools. The school in Garden was given extra resources. By 2001, the student/teacher ratio was more than 10:1, nearly twice as high as in Park. The gross cost per student was also considerably higher.

Policies on decentralisation were welcomed by the local politicians. Some even argued that the local goals were more important than the national curriculum and school legislation. They argued that the local conditions had become so different that central governing was impossible.

Today every school management area [Park belonged to an area with around 2000 students] gets a lump sum, which makes it possible to adjust the work to the local problems. (...) We have a new curriculum, which I believe in. On the basis of this curriculum we can organise the work with respect to the needs of the children and the young (*Local politician, Park*).

School actors, on the other hand, argued that the worsened economic situation and the local budgets tended to be given priority over new policy goals. Particularly in

Garden, decentralisation and the new distribution of resources were seen as threats to the idea of a school of equivalent standard for all children. In addition, increasing demands for planning, administration, documentation and reporting took time from teaching. At the same time, decentralisation and deregulation were seen as necessary and inevitable. As argued by a senior teacher at Park, it was time to “settle accounts with the system of rules and get rid of the trash”. The school actors argued that the idea behind this important policy change, described by the principle in Garden as “the biggest reform for the pupils since the war”, was to give the teachers freedom to adapt their teaching to the needs of the pupils. In that way, the pupils would become more self-determining, independent and capable of taking responsibility for their own study plans. Individualisation and decentralisation of responsibility was particularly stressed in Park. The principal explained that the goal was that teachers should be rationalised away so that “every student could be their own teacher”.

In Garden, the problematic local conditions did not allow for the realisation of policy goals on self-government. Instead, the school followed the city’s aim of improving “results, grades and qualifications for upper secondary education”. Despite the problematic local conditions, students liked being in school. The school building was welcoming and the classrooms were decorated with student exhibitions. During interviews, the former students stressed that schooling, and especially the social dimension, was fun. The school was a meeting place where friends got together and where students lingered after the finish of the school day. These positive attitudes towards education were also displayed in the questionnaire study. In fact, students from Garden were more positive regarding education than informants from Park. Students from Garden expressed stronger trust in meritocratic ideals and their own possibilities of success. They described themselves as being successful in school and recognised the importance of education for success in life. Acknowledging that this was an environment where young people liked to be, where the pedagogic culture did not entail serious threats to social life, this milieu had the potential to encourage processes of negotiation and accommodation.

In my interviews with students from Garden aspects of local identity formation were discussed in relation to the problems of education transitions. For example, Djamel, whose family escaped political persecution in Algeria in the early 1990s, was a successful student who made it to one of the more prestigious upper secondary schools. However, he soon felt forced to drop out of the school:

[Upper secondary school] was tough. It was the first time I met Swedes. You know I came from Garden, we were two foreigners in the new class. I felt out of it. I was used to be the best, but I was not anymore. I could not understand the jokes they were telling. I mean ‘what the hell are they laughing at?’ I was more serious, completely different (laughs). I mean, we were thinking differently, when we were ten years old we were thinking like fourteen year olds. We had hard times at home. I should have gone to another upper secondary school with more immigrants.

Djamel's story indicates that feelings of Otherness are spatially produced and related to an amalgam of social, ethnic and educational dimensions. The interviews drew attention to the 'level' of teaching in Garden. According to Nadia, a Bosnian girl who fled with her family from the Balkans in the early 1990s and who was one of the few students that eventually made it to university, the school was not a very good school in this respect:

I still have problems with spelling, because they [the teachers] always said 'if you can speak, you don't have to be able to spell correctly'. It is really embarrassing today when I'm studying Law and I don't know how to spell certain words. (...) They [the teachers] tried as hard as they could, but I don't think that we learned as much as students in other schools.

In Park, the situation was dramatically different. In the late 1990s Swedish schools had started competing in an evolving education market. The school explicitly aimed to be among the national top schools. Local inspectors praised the teachers and the continuity of the staff. The pedagogical culture encouraged teachers to promote skilful pupils by means of differentiation and individualisation. The school was built in the early 20th century and classrooms displayed few signs of student activities. Instead, bookshelves were occupied by neat lines of classic textbooks from the early 1960s. Students stood to attention for teachers (quite an unusual procedure in Sweden) and the only explicit school misfit, a punk rocker, politely commented on a misspelling in my questionnaire.

The competitive orientation of this school was also highlighted by the former students in my interviews. Sara, who was a successful and ambitious student, described this culture as stimulating while Peter was very critical: "[the schooling] was very traditional and conservative, dictatorial, horrible, they were not good teachers quite simple". He described how he, who had some difficulties in school, was always put under pressure by the teachers during oral tests and that he felt teachers disparaged him in comparison to the good students. The informants from Park described how assessment was not only directed towards fostering academic achievement, but also at fostering good student behaviour. Thus, the formation of behaviour, capacities and identity hence played an important role in the schooling of Park students. Their narratives also indicate an absence of remedial teaching. Such activities were suspended or placed outside the compulsory schedule and therefore rejected by students – "you just wanted to get away from the school as quickly as possible" (Peter). I would argue that this environment, more than Garden, worked in order to construct competitive educational identities and to consolidate divisions between successful and less successful students inside the school.

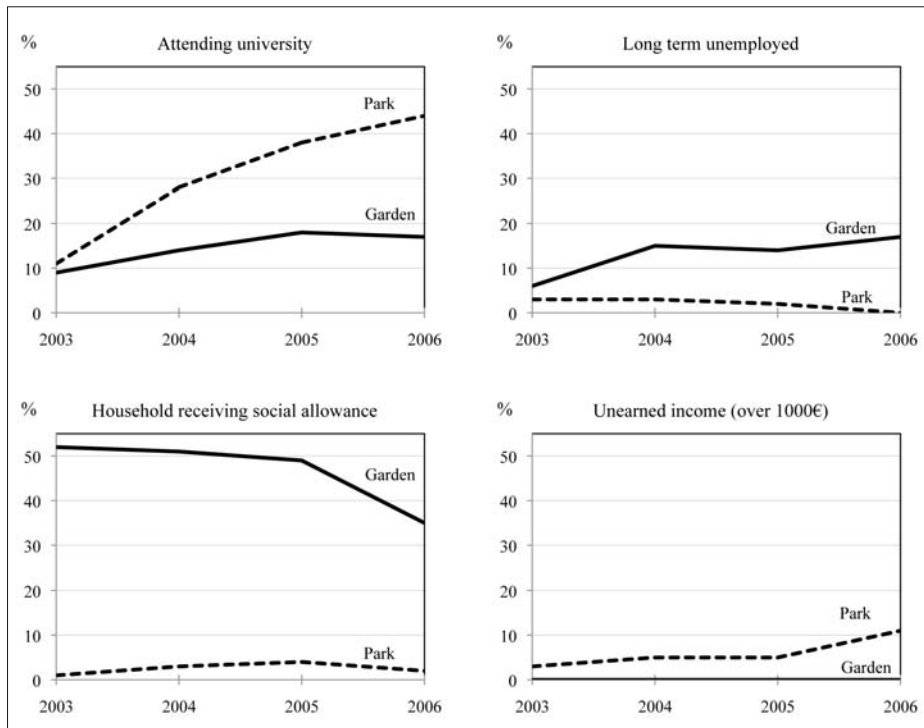
### ***Patterns of social inclusion and exclusion***

There are considerable differences between the two sites regarding the measurable aspects of social inclusion and exclusion. The transition to upper secondary education

is one source of differentiation. Of all students in Sweden who left compulsory school in the year 2000, 89 percent were eligible for admission to a national programme (i.e. a core gymnasium course). In Garden, however, less than half of the students were eligible while the corresponding figure in Park was nearly 100 percent.

Patterns of social inclusion and exclusion among the informants can also be mapped out using longitudinal data from the national longitudinal database “LISA” (Statistics Sweden). The statistics cover the period between 2003 and 2006. According to Figure 1, there are dramatic differences between the sites. More informants from Park made the transition to higher education during this period and they were also less likely to be long-term unemployed ( $> 100$  days) or living in households receiving social security payments. In addition, there are substantial economic differences between the populations exemplified by data on unearned income.

**Figure 1.** Patterns of social inclusion and exclusion in Garden and Park 2003-2006 (%)



*Note:* 2003: Garden  $N = 101$ , Park  $N = 95$ , 2004: Garden = 98, Park = 95, 2005: Garden  $N = 98$ , Park  $N = 95$ , 2006: Garden  $N = 97$ , Park  $N = 95$ .



To sum up, policies on decentralisation provided scope for the accentuation of local differences. A national policy directive on self-government as a pedagogical strategy was neglected in Garden. Garden represents an example of the intergenerational reproduction of social exclusion. Economic compensations have not been able to correct this situation. Yet my fieldwork suggests there was a mismatch between the positive experiences and the ambitious future aspirations of young people in Garden and the statistical information on their failed trajectories. In other words, there seems to have been a mismatch between the Firstspaces and Secondspaces occupied by these young people.

## **Secondspace**

Spatial representations are related to the formation of identity in different ways. As pointed out by Popkewitz (1998), outcomes of normalisation can be thought of as social spaces that students inhabit. Popkewitz (1998, p. 29) argues that “[t]his inhabited space is not what is conventionally thought as physical, ‘contextual’, or geographical” but “one constructed through the systems of ideas”. One aspect of Secondspace draws attention to how school actors picture their student population. These representations are ascribed characteristics that impact school practices. According to the school principals, students in Garden were distinguished by their meagre cultural capital and poor language. This mode of description was also common in local action plans and in local inspection reports from the National Agency of Education. Overall, students in Garden were described in terms of their defects and deficiencies. School staff in Park, on the other hand, reported that 95 percent of the students had the necessary potential and motivation. The school had few immigrant students and, according to the principal, these were immigrants of a special kind, those “who are strongly devoted and have an academic background...”.

Norms on what makes up an ideal student can be understood as locally produced discursive spaces which young people strive to inhabit. These are spaces students have to relate to during schooling and they also relate to the capacities that are valued outside the school, for example in the labour market. Secondspace explores the qualities of these discursive spaces and compares notions of the ‘ideal student’ in Garden and Park. When local politicians and school staff in the two sites talked about what was expected of a successful student, they stressed individual responsibility, autonomy, interest, flexibility, self-confidence, commitment, and the ability to take initiative. Their ideal student was a goal-oriented, lifelong learner, an image adopted from the terms of a national policy. Students who did not fit this description were described as “losers in today’s school”.

In my interviews the former students differed in their view of the ideal student. When students from Garden talked about norms on how to act and behave in school they mentioned features related to classroom order. The good student was “silent”, “calm”, “obedient”, “ambitious”, “careful”, “punctual”, “diligent” and “goal-oriented”.



He or she listened to the teacher and responded to oral questions. Commitment in school activities and willingness to study outside school were also regarded as important.

Djamel: You were supposed to be silent and calm. Listen to the teacher.

Nadia: Behave well, manage well with questions on homework and not disgrace one's family. Do the best you could.

Informants from Park gave descriptions that combined these traditional ideals with the current policy ideals. The good student from their perspective was also “active”, “involved”, “social”, “positive”, “verbal”, “independent”, “self-confident” and “creative”.

Sara: You were supposed to do as you were told, do your homework. You were expected to do the best you could and be willing to learn. You should be social and involved in the lessons, dare to talk in front of the class and not be ashamed of oneself.

Tomas: You were supposed to behave well and stay calm during lessons. Be punctual, bring your things and be active, determinate and dare to ask questions.

In Park, the ideal referred to a curious and testing attitude, which implied that you spoke up for yourself and questioned authorities such as the teachers. The ideal student was active and consciously sought success. Summing up the exploration so far, it is possible to argue that identities, as representations, take on somewhat different forms in the two contexts. In Garden, the student population was considered as a problem in terms of their lack of many of the important competencies embodied by Park students. The pedagogical identity described by informants from Garden might be characterised as traditional or narrow, whereas the Park identity was more complex and dynamic, involving an oscillation between passivity and activity, reproduction and production etc.

In the following section, I continue to discuss aspects of local constructions of identities as a Thirdspace problematic in an attempt to bring the previous perspectives together in a joint analysis.

## **Thirdspace**

As classed and racialised spaces, Garden and Park obviously produce different identities in relation to social inclusion and exclusion. Relatively speaking, young people in Garden are more often excluded from work and further education. It is, of course, difficult to prove that the education system *causes* social exclusion. However, it is possible to argue that the decentralised education system works in order to produce somewhat different local pedagogic identities – a narrow ideal in Garden and a competitive, dynamic and self-governing ideal in Park.

Thirdspace embraces local material conditions, practices of schooling, patterns of inclusion/exclusion and constructions of identities as an intertwined phenomenon. It also draws attention to how distinctions about the inner characteristics and capabili-

ties of students are related to norms for participation. The idea here is that “discursive spaces”; distinctions and differentiations, function to qualify and disqualify students for action and participation (Popkewitz, 1998). Such symbolic spaces are real in the sense that they “provide a way in which to think, speak, see, feel, and act toward the child” (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 29). I argue that they are also real in the sense that they construct *in students* different ways to “think, speak and feel, and act”.

The ascribed and/or real and existing characteristics of students in Garden served to lower the demands in school. The fact is that, when asked to compare the norms on how to be and behave at home and in school, no student from Garden described school as more demanding, strict or hard. Among the informants from Park, on the other hand, no one described the norms *at home* as more demanding, strict or hard. As indicated by informants from Garden, school was fun but they “did not learn as much as other students”. Therefore, their further education careers were problematic, even impossible. The relative social exclusion in Garden is also interesting in relation to the fact that these young people were excluded from aspects of schooling that according to policies were designated as social inclusion. Garden students were excluded from the production of capacities supposed to make them an included individual and provide “opportunities” for participation. Already as they entered school, they were considered to be sufficiently apart (or excluded) to be incorporated or included in this practice. In other words, the same activities that were aimed at social inclusion constructed them as different and outside the normal space of participation in relation to the new policies (cf. Popkewitz, 1998). Their exclusion from these practices of self-governance was justified with respect to their language problems, but also to their particular interests, aims and cultural capital. According to school actors in Garden, it was impossible to follow goals in the curriculum in terms of self-governance:

The goals that are established by the state authorities become problematic for us. These children will not be able to work in the new way. There is no time and energy (...) The pupils are not trained enough to work in a self-governed manner.

Language problems were mentioned as the foremost obstacle. However, it was also maintained that these students’ own objectives stood in opposition to pedagogical ideas about ‘self-government’. These immigrant students, it was argued, had a more instrumental orientation towards education. They did not want to ‘construct knowledge’; they preferred to achieve grades that qualified them for programmes at the upper secondary level. The school also acknowledged the interests of the students and parents and, as a consequence, prioritised the more academic goals.

This de-emphasis of expectations and the resultant spatial, classed and racialised disqualification from the new education of self-governance was indirectly supported by new policies on equivalence that encouraged schools to organise learning with respect to local needs and conditions. This means that the geographies of education, class and race functioned as “dividing practices” where different “pedagogies, forms

of teacher-student relationships, identities and subjectivities are formed, learned and carried" (Ball, 1990, p. 4). Local material conditions and discursively devised representations were thus conflated in the construction of identities. In Garden, this meant that poverty, subordination, discursive power and stigmatisation intersected and fostered daily school practices creating the excluded immigrant student.

This is not to say that the new policies of 'self-government' *were* not problematic in relation to local conditions in Garden. Nor is it to say that these new ideas, if implemented, would actually produce social inclusion in terms of access to education and work. On the contrary, the conditions in Garden, and other Swedish "areas of social exclusion", appear to make just about any kind of policy ineffective in this sense (cf. Sernhede, 2009).

### ***The aestheticisation of education – fabrications, commodities and agency***

In Park the local evaluation of 2001 stressed that the school worked in accordance with *all* the objectives in the curriculum, including those related to the "influence and responsibility of students". Here we find a perfect match between local conditions and such notions of the student population that have allowed for new policies of "self-government" to be accomplished. I argue that this new mode of identity formation resembles the process of aestheticisation (Baudillard, 1983; Featherstone, 1991). As a consequence of the increased documentation in school 'real' learning and 'real' individuals are transformed into texts, symbols and signs that make up what Ball (2003) terms "fabrications". An "economy of signs" (Lash & Urry, 1994) evolves where capacities become commodity signs in a marketplace where students market themselves as commodities (cf. Ball, 2004; Beach & Dovermark, 2007). In order to render evaluation possible, students are encouraged to put themselves and their 'inner' capabilities on display – to act out or even perform in the classroom. Peter who went to school in Park explained that "[a]s a student you ought to *appear* to be interested. You should do your homework. And you ought to be active, to ask questions and *show* your interest at classes." In these new circumstances, students must know what it means to be 'active', reflect on it, speak about it, and perform it. To be an ideal student one needs to talk and think about oneself, and reflect on actions, development and relationships using a certain kind of language. Peter, who went to school in Park, looked at this whole situation with a somewhat critical and cynical attitude: "*it does not matter how good you are, as long as you cannot tell others how good you are.*" Supposedly, the aestheticisation of education functions as preparation for a further career and for the transnational labour market where individuals have to rely on entrepreneurial behaviour; communicate their ethos in the form of 'social skills and competencies', and to demonstrate their 'employability' in order to attract employers. In relation to Bauman's (2008, p. 57) influential work on the consumer society, this practice can in fact be understood as a crucial prerequisite for social inclusion

*as the making and marketing of oneself*: “Members of the society of consumers are themselves consumer commodities, and it is the quality of being a consumer commodity that makes them bona fide members of that society”. If individuals are to be qualified for the labour market by means of education, then students from schools like Garden suffer a double disqualification. Not only are they disqualified in terms of a failure to complete compulsory education, their disqualification is also related to an identity produced by the local educational discourse.

### **Concluding remarks**

In this paper, I have explored some relations between education restructuring and the production of space, identity and social inclusion/exclusion in Sweden. Using Edward W. Soja’s spatial trialectics, I have discussed implications of local responses to a combination of policy initiatives on decentralisation and ‘self-governing’ which arise from the ‘real’ and ‘unreal’ aspects of local educational practices and identities. The practices and outcomes of education policy will always be intertwined with local conditions. This intertwining is complex, and is becoming even more complex, as policies encourage schools to meet the demands and needs of the surroundings in order to realise urban change. This transformation of fundamental political and economic problems into local educational challenges is endemic to the process of restructuring.

I argue that Soja’s framework becomes useful in this context. For example, it enables an understanding of how ethical ideals of participation, and the evaluation of such policies (the measurement of social exclusion), conceal the local production of identities that are based on an amalgamation of material conditions and spatially guided representations. Soja encourages researchers to combine ‘incompatible’ theoretical perspectives in new ways and to think differently about space, policy and social inclusion and exclusion. The exhaustive and experimental nature of Thirdspace, which ought to be given strategic privilege over Firstspace and Secondspace, opens up an epistemological complementarity that might be useful for studies in the field of education policy sociology. This applies especially to empirical studies that use critical and eclectic approaches to explore complex and practical issues, such as intersections between globalisation and local practices. Such studies could also further examine the tentative conclusion of this paper, for example the claim that measurable patterns of social exclusion are interwoven with more ‘aesthetic’ dimensions of identity production in local schools.

It could be argued that my choice of highlighting Park and Garden creates a schematic dualism between two different areas and two different types of identities. Of course, there are deviations from these typologies.<sup>7</sup> Such ambiguities and complexities are important aspects of the lived reality of Thirdspace and need to be addressed in future studies. Here ethnographic observations of classroom practices become desirable. Overall, more research needs to be carried out across other differentiated social groups and educational actors.

Meanwhile, the young informants of this study continue to struggle with their lives. They went to school during a decade that represented dramatic policy changes and a concurrent economic recession. At the time of writing, like other countries, Sweden is facing an economic recession of 'historic proportions' which will most likely accentuate problems of social segregation and 'neighbourhood effects'. What will be the local response in Garden this time around?

### **Acknowledgement**

My thanks to Professor David Hamilton, who helped me with the use of language in this paper.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> By segregation I here refer to a situation where social and geographic differences coincide. I choose not to reserve the label segregation for areas that are defined as victims of the process.
- <sup>2</sup> Upper secondary education is organised in one single school form called Gymnasium [*Gymnasieskola*] with a range of national programmes giving access to higher education. The Gymnasium also includes a so-called individual programme for those pupils who do not qualify for a national programme – because they did not perform to the required level in the prior compulsory school. The individual programme, then, is organised to help pupils to qualify for national programmes.
- <sup>3</sup> All names of the sites and individuals have been changed.
- <sup>4</sup> The interviews were conducted by Lisbeth Lundahl and Gunilla Zackari. When I refer to the voices of politicians I draw on transcriptions, whereas the voices of school actors stem from published work (Zackari, 2001).
- <sup>5</sup> The official definition of “poor” refers to a disposable income which is lower than 60 percent of the national median income.
- <sup>6</sup> In my interviews, the informants’ notions of inclusion and exclusion were linked to work, education, economic well-being, health and housing. Paid labour was discussed as the main prerequisite for social inclusion in line with the political discourse of social exclusion. Individual economic independence was important whereas dependence on welfare state resources was viewed as very problematic for both moral and economic reasons. The result of the questionnaire study supports this. In the ninth grade the informants regarded “Being unemployed”, “Poor education”, “Passivity” and “Poor language knowledge” as the most crucial factors leading to social exclusion.
- <sup>7</sup> In Lindgren (in press) and Lindgren and Lundahl (forthcoming) I discuss how informants from Garden challenge hierarchical structures in the education and labour markets and how they develop and use capacities in order to realise biographical projects and socio-spatial mobility.

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# **Mobilities of Youth – Social and spatial Trajectories in a Segregated Sweden**

Joakim Lindgren

Department of Education, 901 87 Umeå University  
(corresponding author)

[joakim.lindgren@pedag.umu.se](mailto:joakim.lindgren@pedag.umu.se)

Lisbeth Lundahl

Department of Applied Educational Science, 901 87 Umeå University

[lisbeth.lundahl@educ.umu.se](mailto:lisbeth.lundahl@educ.umu.se)

This article explores youth mobilities in three geographic and socioeconomic diverse Swedish contexts. The concept of mobility has become an important feature of individualistic discourses of responsibility relating to inclusion, lifelong learning and self-regulating entrepreneurial behaviour. This article draws attention to the fact that geographical mobility, as a form of human agency, is closely related to social mobility and hence to both spacial and social inequalities. Using life history interviews and statistical data, the paper explores how space, class and ethnicity are related to education and social inclusion and exclusion as young people are spatially situated yet move, desire to move, dream about moving, seek to move and fail to move, as they migrate through, in and out of social communities. The analysis displays how these mobilities are framed by local traditions and circumstances that both enable and restrict. Such mobility might involve processes of personal development and learning, and be the calculated consequence of each individual's chosen life-career. However, mobility might also arise as flight from a stigmatized place. In these cases, refusal to move can also be seen as a form of resistance.

**Keywords:** mobility, biography, space, class, education, policy

Once we recognize that place and mobility are fundamental attributes of all identities, we open the door for future studies addressing these issues in almost any field. (Easthope 2009, p. 78)

## **The regime of mobility**

In this article, we use the notion of mobility in order to understand relations between new forms of education governance and social inclusion and exclusion of youth in an increasingly segregated Sweden. Mobility might appear as a very fundamental or 'natural' dimension of human existence. However, the term 'mobility', as opposed to 'movement', carries social and political meaning and is thus able to conceal powerful ideologies (Cresswell 2006). As a response to changes in capitalist production the free mobility of capital, goods, services, and

people are considered as prerequisites for social and economic growth. Responsibility for employability and social inclusion through self-regulating entrepreneurial behaviour and mobility is thus emphasized by the European Commission (Mitchell 2006). According to EU-policies, the good European is the mobile European (Johansson 2007). Even in Sweden, increased personal responsibility for mobility is regarded as a solution to social and economic problems such as unemployment and social exclusion (cf. SOU 2006: 102). For example, emphasis on the 'work model' [arbetslinjen] implies 'obligations for the individual to take advantage or develop their working capacity, even if it become necessary to change profession or move' (Dir. 2004). Moreover, changes of the Unemployment Insurance Act in 2007 posed new demands on the unemployed in terms of their geographical mobility (Gov. Bill 2006). [1]

From an educational point of view, agency over mobility and cosmopolitan orientations are not universal dispositions; they must be taught, cultivated and modified (Popkewitz 2008). Education systems in western welfare states have undergone restructuring in order to create increased individual mobility and flexibility in the labour market. Indeed, this ambition to alter attitudes towards mobility has been explicit in recent Swedish policy documents:

From a welfare perspective it is necessary that mobility is perceived as an opportunity rather than as a threat. (Swedish Government Official Reports, SOU 2006: 86 p. 111, translated from Swedish).

According to Olson (2008) changes in education policy during the 1990s did in fact mean a fundamental re-definition of citizenship in Sweden – from the long-standing view of a community of nation builders to the currently-popular view of Swedish citizens as mobile, self-determinate, self-realizing, market-oriented nomads. Increasingly, formal education is supposed to extend opportunities for individuals to move in and between different cultures, jobs, and institutions while, in the process, becoming tolerant yet active world citizens (Nihlfors 2008; Olson 2008). In the light of such changes Ulrich Beck (1998) has argued that education and working life are increasingly connected through new demands for individual agency and mobility:

'By all these requirements people are invited to constitute themselves as individuals: to plan, understand, design themselves as individuals and should they fail, to blame themselves' (Beck 1998, p. 28).

Overall, the positive connotations associated with 'mobility as progress, as freedom, as opportunity, and as modernity' (Crewell 2006, p. 2) like the narrative of 'total unfettered mobility' (Massey 2005, p. 81) can be seen as a

hegemonic discourse. Nevertheless, other perspectives have also been offered [2]. For example, Bauman (1998a) pointed out that globalization in fact implies mobility for some and immobility for others:

‘What appears as globalization for some means localization for others; signalling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate. Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values – and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our latemodern or postmodern times’ (Bauman 1998a, p. 9).

From this perspective, mobility is closely related to power and social inequality (cf. Bauman 1998a; 1998b, Castells 1996; Massey 2005; Ohnmacht, Maksim & Bergman 2009). Human agency, or what Bauman calls the ‘freedom to act’ (1999b, p. 43), becomes regulated or concentrated. This means that some people are not in charge of their own mobility - they are either ‘chained to place’ (Bauman 1998b, p. 45) or forced to move. In this article, we argue that the concept of mobility opens up an important interdisciplinary area of research that few educational researchers have defined as their object of study.

## **Mobilities of youth – outlining a new educational problematic**

Indeed, much international educational and sociological research has been based on the study of (upward/downward) *social mobility*. However, as argued by Urry (2000 p. 3), this body of work often treated society ‘as a uniform surface’ and ‘failed to register the geographical intersections of region, city and place’. The educational problematic we seek to outline draws attention to the complex interdependences and social consequences of mobilities [3] that are related to the fact that social mobility of young people is closely related to *geographical* mobility and hence place *and* class, gender and ethnicity (cf. Ball 2006; Bourdieu 1984; Kaufmann et al. 2004; Urry 2000; 2008). Here mobilities and patterns of inequality are understood as reciprocally related (Urry 2008; Kaufmann et al. 2004; Manderscheid 2009; Ohnmacht, Maksim & Bergman 2009). They are both a result of, and a contribution to, social inequality and social exclusion.

The fact is that few educational studies have hitherto acknowledged the pedagogical implications of these dual mobilities. For example, there is a need to understand how young people in a stratified and segregated society learn, develop, and use different forms of dispositions and competences associated with mobilities in order to get access to and participate on the education and

labour market. Such studies could shed light on how unequally distributed resources and capacities for mobility are transformed into economic and cultural capital inside, as well as outside, the education system (cf. Ohnmacht, Maksim & Bergman 2009). Further, few studies have sought to explore the discrepancies between desired, potential and fulfilled mobilities. There is also a need to explore how mobility is made meaningful and how such understandings structure and enable action (cf. Cresswell 2006). We thus identify a need for critical educational studies that pays special attention to the ideological effects of mobility in terms of the social production of inequality and social exclusion. At the same time, there is also a need to move beyond schematic typologies such as those of the immobile working class and the mobile middle class (Thomson and Taylor 2005). Here it is important to acknowledge different forms of mobilities. As pointed out by Frello (2008, p. 32): what matters is not just ‘who can travel where, when and how?’ but also ‘who gets to tell the story?’. To conclude, we argue that this problematic which links mobility with policy, education, place, social inclusion and exclusion is under-researched.

### **This paper’s approach and data sets**

This article draws on data generated in a doctoral project aiming at exploring relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. In the initial shape of the project it was not clear that mobility was central to processes of social inclusion and exclusion and data were not generated with an explicit focus on this aspect. Rather the significance of socio-spatial mobility evolved as an important theme during the analysis.

Our focus is on the mobilities of young people from three schools in three different areas in Sweden. *North*[4] is a small rural area, while *Garden* and *Park* are two areas in the same city. Garden is a disadvantaged segregated area often designated as ‘an area of social exclusion’ [utanförskapsområde]; while Park is a privileged segregated middle class area. A survey exploring a wide range of topics including some questions related to future orientations and mobility, was conducted in 2000. It included 205 students in the 9th grade of a 9-year compulsory school in each of the three contexts [5]. Life history interviews (Goodson 2005) were conducted in 2007 and 2008 with a sub-sample of young people (N = 11) from the school classes participating in the original survey [6]. The life histories allow for exploration of how identities are constructed through narratives that connect the past, the present and the future. As pointed out by Simonsen (2008, p. 21) such narratives organize ‘the invisible meanings of places’, for example the places that are deemed habitable, believable, desirable or stigmatized. The interviews were complemented with



additional statistical data to map out patterns of social inclusion and exclusion among young people in the three contexts [7]. This data set was ordered from the longitudinal database LISA available from the national agency *Sweden Statistics*. In order to explore relations within the quantitative parts of the data set we use multivariate correspondence analysis (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). As argued by Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992, p. 96), this technique ‘thinks’ in terms of relation, field or space and is thus suitable for our purpose. We argue that such complementary approaches to different sources of data have the potential to augment understanding of ‘the social histories, and indeed, the social geographies in which life stories are embedded’ (Goodson 2005, p. 175). Thus, following Easthope (2009, p. 61) we see mobility as ‘an integral aspect of social life’ and as a complex process that requires a consideration of both ‘structural factors and human agency’.

In the paper, we start to explore how space becomes related to education and social inclusion and exclusion in the three contexts as young people are spatially situated but move, want to move, dream about moving, try to move, and fail to move through, in and out of different forms of communities (cf. Gulson & Symes 2007, p. 2). We acknowledge mobility in a broad sense, not only in the form of geographical imagination, as ideas, plans and past experiences, but also in the form of statistical patterns, concrete actions, decisions and choices. Accordingly, mobility is related to school transitions, school to work transitions, travelling, tourism, immigration and migration. We also acknowledge that mobility, or the refusal to move, might be acted out as a form of deviance or resistance (Cresswell 2006). In the article we focus foremost on inequalities related to class and ethnicity. Further research need to address youth mobilities and gender.

### **Mobilities in North, Park and Garden**

Privileged Park and disadvantaged Garden are two places in the same city. This city’s regional labour market is expanding with good possibilities in terms of current further education. However, Park and Garden exemplify the patterns of social, ethnic and economic segregation that evolved during the severe Swedish economic recession in the 1990s. These areas are thus occupied by people that are positioned diversely in relation to education and work as well as economy and health. North, on the other hand, is located in the north of Sweden. The number of inhabitants is less than 4000 and forestry, engineering, and mining are its main industries. The closest cities are more than 80 km away and the local opportunities in terms of education and work are limited.

Initially we explore patterns of ‘perceived’ and ‘real’ mobilities in the three sites. The former involve future orientations held by the informants in the 9th grade concerning further education, work, and mobility. Real mobilities refer to mappable patterns of mobility in the form of transitions to higher education, unemployment or dependence on social benefits. Perceived and real mobilities are of course always conjoined in the lived reality of the informants. This dualism is hence a product of a strategic epistemological operation and we will later try to bring these perspectives together in our analysis of the life story interviews.

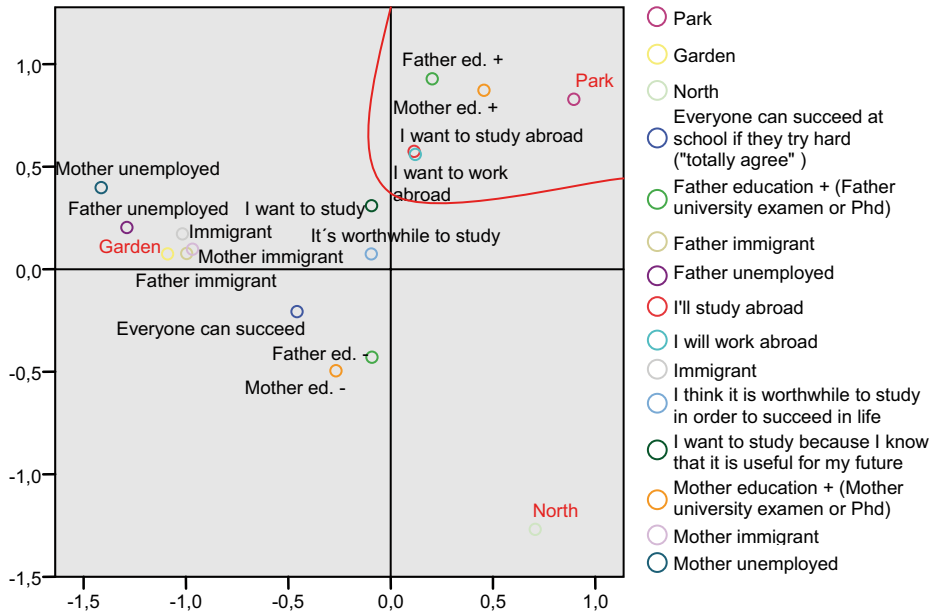
### *Perceived mobilities*

As pointed out by Thomson & Taylor (2005) young people have very different orientations towards mobility and these differences are related to place, i.e. to material and cultural characteristic of neighborhoods and to particularities of family culture and individual social location and agency. Figure 1. displays the proximities between different categories associated with perceived mobilities, the educational background, labour market position and ethnic background of parents in the three sites. Each point refers to a category that the informants may belong to or not. The figure shows that Park is a privileged context where parents are well educated and have strong labour market positions (the category ‘Park’ is therefore close to the categories ‘Father education +’ and ‘Mother education +’ and far away from the categories ‘Father unemployed’ and ‘Mother unemployed’). Garden on the other hand is an area defined by social exclusion from the labour market and by the non-Swedish origin of informants and/or their parents. The figure also indicates that parents in North are relatively less formally educated.

Informants from Park claimed that they wanted to go abroad to study and work. This was in line with other studies that have shown that mobile orientations are more common among well-educated individuals from large cities (Jonsson 2003; Thomson & Taylor 2005). In Garden, we found a somewhat stronger desire for mobility in terms of transitions to further education than in the other areas. Young people in Garden were more positive to school and claimed that it is worthwhile to study in order to succeed in life. Overall these results are in line with studies that have shown that immigrant students, including those with parents lacking a formal education and a strong labour market position, often have high ambitions in relation to education and work (Knocke & Herzberg 2000; Ljung 2000). We suggest that the red line divides those whose plans were explicitly oriented towards geographical

mobility from those whose plans were not oriented towards mobility in this respect.

Figure 1. Spaces of inclusion and exclusion 2000: Perceived mobilities in Park, Garden and North (N: 205)



## Real mobilities

We now draw attention to the actual mobilities of young people from the three contexts. The transition from compulsory education to upper secondary education is crucial in this respect. A 3-year post compulsory education is a necessary requirement for employment in Sweden and entrance to university-level education requires success in a defined 3-year program (e.g. natural sciences). The Swedish education system is comprehensive and almost 90 percent of the students that annually leave compulsory education are eligible for upper secondary education. Pupils that are not eligible for a national program are offered a place on a so-called individual program in order to qualify themselves for the defined national programs. Around 80 percent of all Swedish pupils that entered a national program in 2000 along with informants from this study received certification after four years. By contrast, only 20% of pupils that entered the individual program successfully completed the course. Table I. shows that 89 percent of all students in Sweden were eligible for a national program in the year 2000. Garden stands out as a school with extremely poor

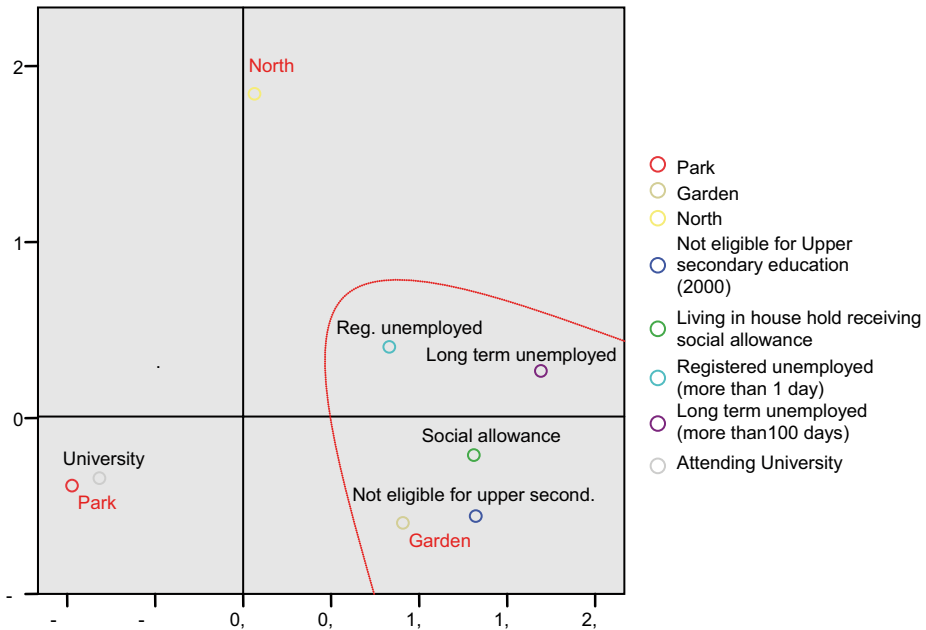
results. Less than 50 percent of the students were eligible for a national program in the year 2000. In contrast, almost all students from Park and 90 percent from North were eligible for a national program this year.

Table I. Eligibility for national program at the upper secondary level the year 2000 in Park, Garden and North (%) (National Agency of Education, SIRIS)

	National average	North	Park	Garden
Eligibility for a national Program	89	90	98	< 50

The measurable patterns of social inclusion and exclusion among the informants in the survey have been mapped out using the ‘Longitudinal integration database for health insurance and labour market studies’, LISA (Statistics Sweden). Figure 2. displays proximities between categories in terms of transition to university, unemployment and dependence on social allowance in the three sites. We suggest that the red line divides those who have made successful transitions from compulsory education to work or higher education (the mobile), from those who have not (the immobile). Young people from Park were most likely to have made the transition to university. Informants from Garden appeared to be excluded more from further education and work than young people from the other sites. Other data on Garden indicate that about one third of all young people in Garden between the ages of 20-25 were neither working nor attending any formal education during 2006 [6].

Figure 2. Spaces of inclusion and exclusion 2006: Real mobilities in Park, Garden, and North (N: 242)



Overall, the data indicate that place, class and ethnicity are important in relation to mobilities of youth in terms of their transition to further education and work. Using Bauman's terminology, the informants from Garden were relatively 'chained to place'. Striking here, too, is the discrepancy between the perceived and real mobility in Garden, where the freedom to act and realise ambitious plans seems to be highly regulated by local conditions.

In the next section, we explore complexities and ambiguities in the life history interviews, with a focus on the meaning of place.

### *Narratives on place and mobility*

Attachment to place and feelings of belonging are important in relation to mobility (Easthope 2009; Malmberg et al. 2005; Gustafsson 2003). Like Gustafsson (2003), we see no contradiction between place attachment and mobility in our data. Some informants with strong ties to their home places have travelled and moved around in order to work or attain educational qualifications.

Informants from the three sites had somewhat different relations to their own neighbourhoods. Informants from Park described their home area as a calm, pleasant, and safe environment. Informants from North also talked about their area as an ideal place in this respect. Untouched natural resources (forests, mountains and lakes) were associated with freedom, peacefulness, and opportunity. In terms of spatial attachment North appeared to be charged with positive meaning and emotional ties, whereas Park was associated with social prestige.

A majority of the people living in Garden, and all of the interviewed informants, were born outside Sweden and, thus, were living in diaspora. Their place identity was not rooted in a single setting, but in two or more places. However, all of the informants from Garden had lived in the area for at least ten years. Overall, informants from Garden described it as a worn down, segregated, and stigmatized area. Yet, Garden was also described as cosmopolitan with a high inward and outward movement. Somewhat paradoxically, it was at the same time described as shut and characterized by immobility. According to the informants, people who live there seldom leave the area while others seldom (have any reason to) go there. One of the informants, Nadia from Garden, described her home area as ‘an island designed for segregation’. In a sense, the informants from Garden had an ambivalent relation to their neighbourhood. They appreciated the people living there, the atmosphere and the school, but they also knew that outsiders, who mostly form their opinions from negative media reports, viewed Garden as a ghetto. Geographical imagination in Garden was thus not only about belonging, but also about displacement.

We argue that these spatial representations are related to actual mobility in the sense that they foster desires and normalities in relation to mobility. These perceived mobilities can be understood in relation to Lefebvre’s (1991) notion of rhythms. Rhythms, in this sense, are real and perceived individual patterns that move or flow in time and space. Rhythms present different routes as normal, desirable or even inevitable. In general, the informants from Garden wanted to get away from their neighbourhood, from the unemployment, poverty, overcrowding and the segregation. They also wanted to escape the social stigma related to Garden. However, as the data suggest, few have actually succeeded in making this journey. Nadia was a successful middle class student and one of the few students who eventually made it to the university. She had left Garden, but its imbued meaning continued to haunt her.

Joakim: What was it like to grow up in Garden?

Nadia: You were not given the same opportunities. When I compare myself to those who are in my class [Nadia was studying law], almost everyone have attended private schools. When I mention Garden they go like 'What? How did you make it to law school?' It feels like people are looking down at me...but as soon as I open my mouth and start to talk and show what I can do they are cool, not as prejudiced as before.

Even the informants from Park and North also talked about leaving their home areas, but they also talked about returning or the possibility of return. Their narratives implied a notion of home that was missing in the stories from Garden informants. Garden was rarely construed as a place that you return to.

To this extent, young people *produce* places through their perceived and real mobilities (cf. Valentine 2003). Park was regarded as a solid platform providing young people with opportunities and self-confidence. Garden and North were constructed as places that young people longed to leave or were forced to abandon. Garden seemed to inform a utopian imaginary in relation to future education and work that required mobility. This mode of imagination was also related to the fact that many of the young people from Garden had come to Sweden with their families as refugees seeking a better future (Lindgren 2010). North is different. Here it is the peripheral localisation and the limited education and labour market, which force young people to be mobile. For example, the closest upper secondary school is more than 80 km from North and in order to access a wider selection of programmes young people have to move even further afield. In the next section, we focus on this kind of educational transition.

## On transitions to Upper secondary education

In order to attend upper secondary education young people from the three sites had to go to schools located outside their home areas. We argue that the term 'motility' (Kaufmann 2002; Kaufmann et al. 2004; Kesselring 2006; Kesselring & Vogl 2004a) can be used to explore intersections between socio-spatial inequality, mobility and social exclusion here. Motility refers to the potential for mobility, and responds to the questions: 'What enables people to be mobile' (Kesselring & Vogl 2004a, p. 9) or 'Why did you leave?'. Motility consists of three dimensions that framed transitions to upper secondary education. First, transitions were regulated by *access*, e.g. eligibility, and means of transportation. In addition, they involved *competence* or skills, abilities and knowledge to capitalise on the access. Finally, the transitions to upper secondary education were mediated by the *appropriateness* of particular choices, the ways that individuals profited by ease of access and relevant competence.

Today upper secondary education in Sweden is a complex market where choices - or motility - are based on parental knowledge, study counselling, local traditions, and increasingly aggressive marketing by institutions. Different schools achieve different status related to their results and the ethnic composition of students. Informants from Park and Garden talked about schools in terms of 'immigrant schools' or 'Swedish schools' indicating their awareness of such differences. In 2000, students from compulsory school could choose upper secondary education schools in the city of Garden and Park for the first time. Earlier students had been appointed to schools in accordance to the so called 'neighbourhood principle'. As Peter from Park explained, the new marketised system privileged successful students: '[T]hat was the way it worked, those with good grades could steer their way through the education system'. In the interviews, it was apparent that the local differences between schools made these transitions problematic for many students. Nadia explained how other students were much better prepared than those who came from Garden. '[I]t was obvious in Swedish [as a subject], you could tell by the way people expressed themselves and wrote, and also by the results in the National tests'.

These differences also caused problems for students from Park. The school that Sara chose was traditionally attended by Park students. This used to be a high status upper secondary school, but with the new patterns of mobility, the structure of the student population had changed.

Joakim: Can you describe this change?

Sara: We were mixed with students from other schools. They had completely different ideas on how to behave... show up late, play music, talk on cell phones, not listen, not do homework.

Sara, whose competitive middle class habitus was formed in Park, missed the keen competition in her former school:

Sara: I really missed that everyone wanted top grades, the new class mates did not care at all, it was an odd transition... I thought that these idiots should have attended some other school in stead of sitting there and disturb the lessons.

In the following, we draw attention to the narratives of Djamel from Garden and Peter from Park, two students whose trajectories crossed in a way that make the significance of place, class and ethnicity visible.

### *Case 1: Djamel and Peter*

Djamel and his family escaped political persecution in Algeria and came to Sweden in the early 1990s. Education was very important to Djamel and his family. Djamel was a good student in the final years of compulsory school and



had his aim set on becoming an engineer like his very demanding and supervising father. Djamel wanted to go to the Electrical Engineering Programme but his father convinced him to go to the more prestigious 'Natural Science programme'. He obtained a place at a high status school dominated by Swedish middle class students.

Djamel: It was very tough, it was the first time I met Swedish students. I came from Garden, we were two immigrants in the class. I felt excluded right away. You know I was used to be a good student, in that class I was not. I did not get the jokes they were telling each other, I mean what the hell are they laughing at? I was more serious, completely different [laughter], we [from Garden] were completely different, when we were ten years old we were thinking like fourteen year olds, we have been through hard times. I should have attended another school with more immigrants. I tried to change [school] but it was impossible.

Peter from Park grew up in a middle class family of Swedish origin. For him the transition to upper secondary school was also very problematic. In compulsory school he was an average student, but his attitude towards school was rather negative. Peter had vague dreams about starting an enterprise just like his father, but he did not know what programme to choose. Eventually, due to his second-rate grades he ended up at the Social Sciences programme in a low-status 'immigrant school'.

Peter: This was not a school that I had chosen and I did not like it there at all.

Joakim: What was it that you disliked?

Peter: The milieu was very hard. It was a much too big step. This was not a good school quite simply. They were practically selling drugs in the schoolyard and there was gang fights going on. I came there on my own with just one friend in another class. Therefore, I did not want to stay in that school.

Joakim: Can you describe this school?

Peter: Well, it was like a trashcan (laughter). It was not a mix of students, it was only those who did not manage very well in school, those who managed even worse and those who did not care at all. All these students were put in the same school, no wonder things were not working out good.

Joakim: What did it feel like?

Peter: Well, it was hard to come from the conservative, prejudiced and even racist Park, it was a total collision.

As argued by Peter the possibility of school choice resulted in a situation where free mobility was granted to those with good grades. Nevertheless, not even good grades were a guarantee of successful mobility. For Djamel upper secondary education was now a closed chapter. He gave up his educational

career and joined his brother's business. However, for Peter there was a solution. After three weeks his mother, who worked as a school nurse, had convinced the authorities that his health was so seriously threatened that he must be given a place in some other school. Two weeks later Peter started in a high status school where he felt safe and where he could obtain his degree.

These stories highlight how problems of housing and school segregation intersect in the mobilities of two young individuals. Djamel's strong educational determination and motivation was no help to him in the process of handling this socio-spatial transition. His father's formal cultural capital and engagement did not support him in this respect either: there was no *competence* in the family that could be applied appropriately to foster Djamel's access within the field of upper secondary education. Peter, on the other hand, had neither a strong interest nor a clear vision about what he wanted in terms of further education, but he had a mother that was there to help him. In this respect are mobile competence and appropriation to be understood as relational and structural phenomenon framed by social networks, stigmatization, distinct forms of cultural capital, and spatial practices of class and ethnicity.

In the next section we discuss experiences and memories related to mobilities.

### **Mobilities and identity – biographical turning points**

Mobilities may give rise to experiences and memories that potentially affect and change the self or the individual's notion of them self. Accordingly, mobility biographies can include critical incidents, 'epiphanies' (Denzin 1989), life-changing learning events (Antikainen et al. 1996) or turning points (Hodkinson & Sparkes 1997) that are related to the formation of new identities. In the following, we analyze aspects of mobility that are related to such informal learning.

#### ***Case 2: Dijedon and Peter***

Dijedon from Garden escaped from Kosovo with his family during the Balkan wars in the early 1990s. He often thinks about an episode that took place on a summer day when he was seven years old and was forced to move between different refugee camps in the northern Sweden with his family. This day a large number of refugee families stood in line outside a restaurant in order to get food. Suddenly a car stopped and an elderly woman got out of the car. She reached for something in the backseat and walked up to Dijedon and gave him a toy dinosaur and one hundred Swedish kronor. At first, he did not dare to

take the gift from the unknown woman, but with the permission of his parents, he accepted it. They also made him express his thanks. He was happy with the gift, but over time, he has thought about this episode a lot. He still has the dinosaur at home. Still today, he does not know why he was given the gift. He has continued to ask himself if he is a person that other people shall pity. He has asked himself why the woman gave him the gift and not the other children standing beside him? Although Dijedon does not question the good intentions of the old woman, he knows that this is an incident that no Swedish child of his age has ever experienced. In this case, mobility was associated with complex feelings of gratitude, marginalisation, displacement, exclusion and abjection. As a turning point, this story is related to Dijedon's experience as a young refugee. This 'change' of identity did not take place at the time of the original incident, but has slowly affected Dijedon as a part of his biographical reflexivity. Moreover, this change of identity was not the result of a strategic usage of mobility.

Peter's epiphany is different in this respect since it displays a strategic usage of mobility in order to form the own identity.

Peter: I wanted to become an entrepreneur and I had rather high demands on myself, maybe not in school, but at that time I felt that... to succeed implied a job where I could make a lot of money. We were very fixated on money, so I wanted to work with something that involved a lot of money. That was all I had in mind, so I had to find ways to get there.

Joakim: From where did you get these ideas?

Peter: From my parents I suppose, but also from Park as a milieu. You know, it is a very safe milieu to grow up in, but there is also a kind of shallowness which means that money is important and to succeed in life means to have more money.

After he graduated from the upper secondary school he did not know what to do so he took some temporary jobs before he decided to go to Spain in order to learn Spanish. He and his girlfriend stayed in a small and shabby apartment: 'It was placed in a ghetto. We had mice running around on the floor and burn-marks on the ceiling, there must have been a fire there. It was not good at all.' After that, Peter worked in a restaurant in Denmark where he had to work twelve hours a day under 'horrible conditions':

Peter: I lost 13 kilos in two months. It did not work. I realized that I had to go to the university and get my self an education in order to not having to work as a real...[pause] ... well, to work under such circumstances without any rights.

Peter himself argues that he learned a lot from these experiences and that they affected him profoundly. For example, he recognized the need to be able to choose his own life conditions. He also argued that his mobilities had made him revalue many aspects of life.

Peter: As I look back I realize how screwy, confined and conservative it was in Park. I mean, was that really me or was it the local milieu? Today, for example, my political values are completely different. Somewhere along the way there was a change'.

Overall, his narrative reflects a somewhat typical phase in the lives of middle class youth in terms of an educational moratorium, an educational province, and a period of experimentation and self-fulfilment (Kloep & Hendry 1997; Chrisholm 1990). Peter consciously used geographical mobility in order to get new language competencies and new experiences. We can think of his strategy as a kind of deliberate reinvention of the self through spatial mobility. Such movement requires a particular orientation towards, or construction of, mobility.

## **Constructions of mobility**

Understanding of, and attitudes towards, mobility are related to the actual mobilities of youth. The way individuals perceive mobility is thus related to their willingness to move, their current mobility and how they understand their mobility in retrospect. For example, we argue that places you have visited or resided say something about who you are. Certain forms of mobility are valued while other forms of mobility are looked upon with suspicion; that is, there are 'good' and 'bad' mobilities (Easthope 2009; Urry 2007). Informants from the three areas mentioned locations with different symbolic connotations. Informants from Park mentioned places like New York, Barcelona, Copenhagen, or the Alps; informants from North mentioned tourist attractions in Sweden and charter resorts in the Mediterranean and informants from Garden spoke of former war zones on the Balkan or trouble spots in the Middle East.

Szerszynski & Urry (2006, p. 114) have discussed what they term 'cosmopolitan predispositions' which refer to 'particular intellectual and aesthetic orientations towards cultural and geographical difference, and distinctive kinds of competence'. These predispositions are partly tangential to the previously mentioned notion of 'motility'. They include the means to be mobile, a curiosity and openness about other places, peoples and cultures, a willingness to take risks in these encounters and semiotic skills to understand processes related to mobility. Such mobile orientations are in turn linked to a

specific awareness about the symbolic value that mobility holds in our times. This disposition equals Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital and can thus be termed 'mobility capital' (Jonsson 2003). We suggest that a crucial feature of a cosmopolitan predisposition is to actually see and talk about mobility as something valuable, i.e. as something that has the potential to affect and develop the self and as something that others value as a specific 'mobility capital'.

In the biographical narratives discussed above, we see that travelling has an economic dimension in that not all of the informants' families had the means to travel. According to Anders in the North, who never went abroad with his parents, travelling manifested an important dividing line between those who could afford to travel abroad and those who lacked the means. The narratives also exemplify different ways to talk about mobility. In general, informants from Park and North talked about travelling in a way that signalled their embodiment of 'cosmopolitan predispositions'. They discussed mobility as a vehicle or resource for identity formation and they believed that travelling with families or friends fostered qualities such as independence and responsibility. Using the words of Thomson & Taylor (2005 p. 331) we think of their orientations towards mobility as 'aspirational'. In contrast informants from Garden appeared to be more 'pragmatic' (Thomson & Taylor 2005 p. 331). They did not talk about travelling in terms of recreation or personal development. Nevertheless, as we will show in the next case, it is possible to embody some of these cosmopolitan predispositions without being particularly mobile and, inversely, it is possible to be mobile without having all these predispositions.

### *Case 3: Anna*

Anna grew up in North with her family. Her mother gave birth to Anna's oldest sister at the age of seventeen and both parents went to work directly after compulsory school. Her mother worked as a cleaner and her father started out in the local mine. During Anna's childhood he worked as a seasonal worker for the National Road Administration. Periodically he was stationed in North city located about 200 km away and with about 100 000 inhabitants. At the time of the interview, Anna just had her first child and was on parental leave from her work at the local grill bar. She lived in North with her boyfriend and their newborn baby. She described her life in North as an active choice and that there was no other place she would rather be.

In Anna's biographical narrative mobilities are important. As she puts it, her parents have always 'been "good" at travelling'. She explained that they went abroad at least once every year during her childhood. Her parents still travel abroad on charter flights twice a year and the whole family is invited to join them on one of these trips.

After finishing upper secondary education, Anna worked as a seasonal worker. She said that the intensive periods of work created opportunities to travel which suited her fine. It was a way of life that she had learned from her father, she argued.

Joakim: Where have you been travelling?

Anna: The matter of fact is, I have mostly been to Gran Canary. But also Tenerife. Turkey and Fuerteventura. Mostly for two weeks. Fuerteventura was three weeks, but then I got very homesick. Two weeks is long enough.

Joakim: What is good with travelling?

Anna: Well, first you grow as a person when you go away. I went abroad by myself for the first time at the age of sixteen and a half. You get to try and to take care of yourself. You see, some of my friends here in North are nervous when they are about to fly to Gothenburg, because they have to change planes at Arlanda [airport] – it is like: 'How would they manage?' I mean, I have flown all by myself from Spain. I had to take a cab from the hotel without knowing where to go really... I think that you grow as a person [when you travel]. You learn to be much more independent, you get better self confidence, you dare to take risks, you take more initiatives.

Compared to others in North of the same age Anna considered herself as urbane and experienced. Clearly, she saw travelling as a means of strengthening her self-confidence. A few years earlier, she had moved away from her family in North in order to attend secondary education:

Anna: I moved to North city and I thought that I was the coolest girl in the world. We were three girls from our class that moved there in order to study. However, I was not mature enough to move away from home at the age of sixteen, even if my father was there [in North city] a couple of days a week. I was extremely lonely; I did not know anyone at school. I mean, I had gone to the same school for nine years and always known everyone. It can be a disadvantage if you have never tried anything new when you are coming from a small community to a new class with 25 totally unknown people in a totally unknown city. I did not even know how to get to the newsstand. It did not suit me at all. I started to cut class at Fridays in order to go home to mum. I got very outrageous if she did not call me every night (...) School work was suffering because I cut class... Some

people might be able to deal with this without problems, but for me it was just a too big changeover.

Joakim: What was it that you longed for?

Anna: Just the safety. In North city I was left out and alone, you see I was used to be surrounded by a large family. There I was by myself in a giant city. I was used to be able to ride the bike for five minutes in order to see a friend at the other side of North, everything was so nearby and I dared to stay out late. In North city I had to go by bus for 20 minutes, I had no money for that, it was dark, I was scared.

Anna's story draws attention to many different problems associated with mobility. Anna's feelings of insecurity were related to both gender, class and space. As a young woman her freedom to move was restricted by fear of sexual violence. As a young working class woman from a small community she was struggling with her poor self confidence in school. Insecurity and poor self-confidence made the transition to upper secondary education in a larger city difficult. Overall Anna's story supports Thomson and Taylor (2005) who have claimed that the dualist distinction between cosmopolitans and locals is an over-simplification. Anna's predispositions are clearly cosmopolitan, but *is* she really a cosmopolitan?

Informants from Garden seldom spoke about mobility in terms of personal development. There may be many explanations to this. Fleeing political persecution and war is a completely different form of mobility than taking a charter flight. Dijedon from Kosovo argued that some people that have come to Sweden from traditional agricultural societies are not used to mobility. He described his 'small country with many different cultures and dialects' as immobile:

Dijedon: The villages [in Kosovo] were composed by relatives who stuck together. People have always been locked-in, not travelled around. They have just tried to keep their village together.

However, in a sense Dijedon and his family have been extremely mobile. At the age of eight he had attended six different school classes in Kosovo and Sweden. Because of their traumatic and difficult situation, his parents were not able to support him in this process. Dijedon was exposed to a constantly changing environment of new people, new languages and new spaces. In his story he discussed how the movement between Kosovo, various refugee camps, villages, cities and schools in Sweden demanded his adaptation. His own description of this process was stoic:

Joakim: How did you experience this transition [from the traditional agricultural village in Kosovo to Sweden]?

Dijedon: It was a lot of new things...[pause] you just try to absorb...[pause] But, to be honest, you don't think about it that much. Maybe it is more now when you ask me these questions, you see at that point *this was just something that belonged to the world.*

In fact, it was during the interview that Dijedon for the first time started to reflect that his mobile experiences as a refugee might have been valuable; that he might actually have learned something from them. At the same time, there is no doubt that his mobility changed him or, as he puts it, 'all my life has been about adaptation'. Dijedon's approach to mobility was not that of an aspirational cosmopolitan. Nevertheless he has had extensive experiences of mobility and he has required (or acquired) the ability to handle such mobility. However, his mobility have not been seen as valuable by anyone, including himself. Mobility is thus related to fundamental processes of learning and identity formation. For example, one might argue that Anna's mobilities were imagined as products of her own influence whereas Dijedons were reactive or forced on him. Notwithstanding the differences between their mobilities, if Anna has been *moving*, Dijedon has been *moved* (Kesselring & Vogl 2004b). In this sense, Anna has probably learnt to imagine herself as the creator of her own life.

## Discussion

In this paper, we have explored how mobilities of youth are intertwined with local conditions and biographical experiences and imagination. Our data supports Bauman's (1998a) general thesis about mobility as a 'stratifying factor' in society. Possibilities to move to desired places are unequally distributed between young people and between places. Thus, they contribute to processes of social inclusion and exclusion. This picture differs from both the existing policy discourse on mobility and sociological narratives of individualisation that assume individuals have increased possibilities to relocate themselves in social and geographical space. These policies have heightened the obligations of individuals to be mobile in order to qualify themselves on the education and labour market. This contradictory situation might produce a mismatch between perceived and actual mobilities. For individuals who are 'chained to place' this is a fundamental biographical problem. Currently, mobility is the norm such that local attachment is seen as deviant from this norm and even regarded as an index of social deprivation. Under these conditions the negative experiences of immobility are most likely accentuated and individualised.

Another question refers to the inclinations and possibilities for resistance within the hegemonic discourse of mobility. In our data, there are relatively few



signs of resistance. Almost univocally, informants perceived mobility as something positive and desirable. Nevertheless, there might be examples of resistance. Anna from North argued that her decision to settle in North was an active choice based on her definition of a happy life. She described this decision in terms of an active rejection of careerist thinking in a materialistic culture. Her strategy resonates with a northern Swedish collective resistance to urbanisation, centralisation and labour-mobility policies (viz. 'removal van politics') in the 1960s and 1970s. Maybe her choice to be local in an era of mobility is an example of resistance. But then again, not everyone has the option to perform 'immobility as agency'. For most young people in Garden this is hardly an alternative. However, as noted by Lindgren (2010), the utopian life projects launched by young people in Garden can be understood as another form of resistance. These projects are not formulated 'collectively', but they might have the potential to challenge structural hierarchies and social discrimination in the education or labour market.

Overall, mobility appears to be of the utmost importance for young people. In their biographical work, via their dreams, their aspirations, struggles, failures, and the eventual realisations of their plans, they produce places and mobilities. Education plays a crucial role in this process by enabling or restricting their perceived and real mobilities. Yet, we know little about how young people develop and use mobility as a resource in their lives. For example, what is the role of the school in this respect? Do schools produce mobile pre-dispositions, competences and identities? If so, which schools and programs?

## Notes

[1] Geographical mobility has been seen as a crucial political question in Sweden during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a part of the socialist modernist welfare state project, including the development of the unemployment agency, vocational training, public schooling and vocational guidance, policies on geographical mobility were intrinsic to the realisation of this project (cf Lindbeck 1974).

[2] Somewhat surprisingly, the movement of individuals has stayed rather constant in Sweden for the last hundred years (i.e. since the urbanisation of the nineteenth century). In fact, it has decreased during the last decades. About 98 percent of the population live in the same local labor market region from one year to the other and 87 percent stay for over a decade (Fischer & Malmberg 2001). However, during the recession in the 1990s young people aged 20-24 started to move to the larger cities in order to seek employment or further education (Statistics Sweden 2005). Highly educated people living in cities are the most mobile and research suggests that people who move are more likely to keep on moving (SOU 2003:37, Jonsson 2003).

[3] Following Urry (2007) we use the plural form of mobility since we are interested in various forms of movement.

[4] All names of places and individuals are fictional.

[5] The survey was conducted in the schools. North refers to two school classes (out of two classes at this particular school) N = 53, whereas Park refers to three school classes (out of four) N = 68. Garden finally, refers to three school classes (out of four school classes) N = 88. In Garden one special class for newly arrived immigrant students was left out for language reasons. These students belonged to a particular group in the sense that their grades were lower than the average in Garden.

[6] The selection of the informants (4 in North, 4 in Garden and 3 in Park) was based on the criteria that they had lived and been to school in their home areas over a considerable period.

[7] The longitudinal data stem from the period between 2003 and 2006. This sample included all the pupils from the selected school classes in North, Park and Garden (N = 250). This means that this sample is somewhat larger than the survey sample (N = 209). The falling off refers to students that were absent at the day of the survey. In Park, one of the school classes was organized as two separate groups and one was unable to participate in the survey. This mode of organization was not based on any principle of ability grouping.

[8] The source of this information has been omitted in order to guarantee the anonymity of the places and informants.

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# DISCUSSION

In this final section, I discuss how the present articles work together to address the overall aim and the research questions. I also use the articles to engage in a further analysis and discussion of how the thesis contributes to the research area and suggests further research. Finally, this section includes some concluding notes on writing and publication.

## Summarising conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to explore relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion. I explored these relations using three Swedish cases: the disadvantaged segregated Garden, the advantaged segregated Park, and the rural North. I presented my explorations in four articles using a wide range of data such as biographical interviews with former students, survey data, longitudinal statistics, and interviews with local politicians and school actors. I worked with the concepts of biography, space, and mobility in order to form problematics providing fresh understandings of how education governance intersects with young people's dreams of further education and work and, in addition, how these dreams were formed, realised, corrected or crushed. I suggested that education policies and local conditions interact and that, together, they shape and mediate young people's possibilities for realising inclusive biographical projects and moving in social and geographical space.

I mapped out patterns of social inclusion and exclusion using statistical measures in the different social contexts. The data showed that former students from Garden, young people that in many ways had the most optimistic and ambitious plans, were generally excluded from post-compulsory education and work. Overall, the data confirmed well-known aspects of currently segregated Sweden, i.e. how youth trajectories are formed by the local geography of education and structural inequalities. In this sense, the thesis contributed to studies of relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion as a problem of access and social mobility, i.e. as a problem of *equity*.

In the articles, I give examples of how young people's dreams are formed. The belief in school and the legitimacy of education is conventionally taken for granted in the problematic of equity. Here the school is viewed as a progressive institution within a modernist welfare state. However, there is some evidence that the production of expectations in relation to education is threatened. In the EGSIE-project, the interviewed school actors expressed disillusionment with this role for the school. Among the students it was the young people in Garden

that appeared to have the strongest belief in education. One important research question thus referred to the 'imagined futures' of these young people.

In Lindgren (2010a), I elaborated on the concept utopian diaspora biography (UDB) in an exploration of the following research question: How is it possible to understand the fact that disadvantaged students from a segregated area have such optimistic future orientations in relation to further education and work? This concept emphasises that individual biographies are 'constituted in the course of collective history' (Bourdieu 1984 p. 467) and not manifestations of pure individual will. I used this tentative conceptual tool to understand a process whereby a high level of aspiration and meaning concerning education and labour is accumulated as a consequence of the social, temporal and spatial dynamic of refugee biographies in contemporary Sweden. I suggested that these diasporic biographies are formed in the transition between two partly different cultural systems. In a sense, these biographical mobilities involved a rapid individualised form of general societal change in quality of life, health, education and perceived opportunities – social change that normally affects populations over time through the so called 'elevator or lift effect'. I argued that the imagination produced is ideological and utopian in the sense that it contains a kind of rupture between 'objective' and 'subjective' life chances. It simultaneously has a practical utopian dimension, since it challenge structural forms of discrimination by exploring the possibilities of another life.

I also suggested that policies related to decentralisation might have contributed to the production of this mode of imagination among students in Garden. The data indicated that teachers in Garden adjusted their teaching to certain ideas about the excluded immigrant child. Teaching appeared to be characterised by low expectations that contributed to the non-competitive school culture that a large group of students enjoyed. Already in the EGSIE youth survey there was some evidence that indicated local differences in this respect. Among Garden-students with parents without higher formal education 22 percent claimed to be very successful in school, the corresponding figure in Park was equal to nil (Lindgren 2003). It is thus likely that schooling in Garden fostered a somewhat 'unrealistic' belief in the equality of the education system and an idea that everyone could succeed if only they tried hard. Few would argue that this belief is a problem per se. On the contrary, 'democratisation' is frequently regarded as a very positive and productive feature of educational settings. However, this situation became problematic in relation to the students' possibilities of qualifying for and successfully making the transition to further education. Progressive ideas on 'adaption' and 'need' thus worked in order to disqualify students based on locality, class, and ethnicity.

I also sought ways to understand how plans related to further education and work were amended or crushed. The data suggested that there is a large group of young people from Garden whose biographies are failures in this respect.



Using the words of Bourdieu and Champagne (1999 p. 423) their exclusion is particularly ‘disgraceful in the sense that they seem to have “had their chance” and because social identity tends more and more to be defined by the school system’. However, among the few examples of ‘failed biographies’ in my small sample, nobody identified themselves as ‘excluded’. Instead, the informants appeared to adjust or revise their biographies. A tentative explanation is that individualisation is self-regulating on the level of individual consciousness – instead of admitting to be among the outcasts, individuals struggle to sustain an inclusive and successful narrative. More research needs to be carried out in order to understand how narrative identities incorporate biographical failures and processes of social exclusion.

### **Student biography and Utopian diaspora biography**

In Lindgren (2010b), I suggested that an important aspect of schooling today is the production of particular cultural identities that are supposed to foster social inclusion. My argument was that relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion are a matter of both structural inequalities and identities. I used the notion of aestheticisation to describe an increasing focus on discursive, or linguistic, dimensions of identity formation. Aestheticisation implies that students are transformed into ‘fabrications’ in order to be evaluated. Such evaluations aim at producing social inclusion, but simultaneously produce distinctions that disqualify individuals for participation. This discursive approach constructs these problems as a matter of reason or *knowledge*. My notion of ‘student biography’ (SB) belong to this strand of educational studies. SB refers to a formative social technology that serves cultural needs (Lindgren 2007). I argued that one important feature of SB is to create behavioural motivation and narrative legitimisation. In order to understand the telos and implications of SB it is possible to compare this technology with the previously mentioned form of biographical projects associated with UDB. The following comparison is centred on particular absences in the narrative of SB as a mode of education governance in contemporary Sweden. In other words: What changing structures of society give rise to this social technology?

Tentatively, I suggest that SB aims at producing a future oriented biographical reflexivity similar to the one inherent in UDB. My suggestion is that SB has evolved in order to generate a form of reflexivity that current Swedish society fails to provide. As a biography-generator, SB is necessary because ‘grand narratives’ and actual proofs of social progress have eroded. As pointed out by Elliott (2007 p. 8) current post-Fordist subjects are relatively free ‘of unrealistic hopes and aspirations, of unrealisable goals and values’. In a situation where life courses have become increasingly de-standardised, discontinued, and interrupted, young people’s narrative identities have to be

supported. SB thus aims at completing eroded narrative identities and their time conceptions. The explicit purpose of SB is to create motivation and formulate individual goals. SB thus aim to restore the present ruptured, discontinued or 'punctuated' time conception into a linear time where there is room for progress and 'whole life projects' characterised by the ideas of long-term planning, thinking and acting (Bauman 2007 p. 32 & 49). In this respect, SB is related to EU policies on lifelong learning and entrepreneurship (Cf. Berglund 2008). One might also argue that SB offers individuals 'ontological security' (Giddens 1991) in the form of structured biographical narratives that unfolds over time. In a sense, SB is a nostalgic practice that struggles to locate, preserve and 'draw up' current transient, mobile and liquid identities. However, I have also raised the question whether, over time, this technique might preserve excluded identities and hinder new social becoming.

The tentative relations between SB and UDB raise many additional questions. For example, if motivation depends on deep-rooted cultural mediation and biographical experiences, then the installation of motivation by means of 'artificial' biographical injection (e.g. SB) becomes a difficult task for teachers. Moreover, if humans do not create their own motivation one might argue that it is no use blaming individuals for their lack of motivation.

There are also differences between the types of biographical reflexivity associated with UDB and SB. The former is based in collectivism, whereas the latter is based on individualism. Collectivism is a social foundation for solidarity (cf. the words of the refugee parents in Garden: 'We must give something back'), whereas individualism encourages a more private approach to education, one that is currently endorsed by education policies (Olson 2008). Using the words of Bauman (2005 p. 309), one might say that the dream and hope for a better life via education has been 're-focused on our own egos and reduced to tinkering with our bodies or souls'. As noted by Vincent and Ball (2001), taking a 'personal standpoint' towards education has traditionally been a feature of competitive middle-class strategies. It is currently encouraged and made possible by policies on marketisation and choice. Overall, SB fits very well with this view of education as a private, rather than a public good. I also suggest that the overall formation of included and excluded identities in school can be understood as arising from an increasingly important mode of governance: the culture of 'performativity' (Lyotard 1984).

### **Aestheticisation and performativity in education**

Jean-François Lyotard's (1984) notion of performativity (cf. Ball 2001; 2003; Beach & Dovemark 2007; Löfdahl & Prieto 2009; Marshall 1999) is arguably one of the most important phenomena in current studies on education policy change. I would like to continue this discussion by relating my notion of aestheticisation of education to the culture of performativity and performative

identities. My objective here is to join the emphasis on outcomes of schooling as understood by the equity approach with a 'knowledge approach' that focus on the 'rules and standards of reason that "makes" the student' (Lindblad & Popkewitz 2001d p. 22). The argument is that performativity is a concept that links together the equity problematic and the knowledge problematic.

Originally, the notion of performativity goes back to Austin's (1962) ideas about 'performative utterances', i.e. utterances that do not describe things, but simply do what they utter. Ricoeur (1976) later picked up this idea about how language constitutes selves or subjects. Butler (1999) and Foucault (1995) have also used performativity to understand processes of normalisation, control, gender formation, and social exclusion. Lyotard's usage of performativity describes the 'subsumption of education to the efficient functioning of the social system [i.e. capitalism]' (Marshall 1999 p. 309). According to Lyotard (1984), performativity is a provider of both behaviour motivation and narrative legitimisation. Performativity side-steps emancipationist, humanist, or modernist ideals and re-directs education to the measurable aspects in terms of input and output. As pointed out by Ball (2003), performative processes of evaluation change what teachers and students are doing *and* who they are. Within this feature of performativity, I identify the link between equity and knowledge: performativity transforms students' 'being', their identities, into achievements or mere outputs. Performativity, argues Ball (2003 p. 215),

*'...is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of "quality", or "moments" of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement.'*

According to Lyotard (1984) one of the basic characteristics of performativity is that social subsystems (like the education system) do not any longer require any form of consensus in order to function effectively, since consensus is provided automatically in the performance of the system itself. In the performative culture, different, often incompatible, learning theories, traditions, methods, and techniques can co-exist and complement each other. For example, my impression is that both conservative and progressive pedagogical traditions are currently subsumed by performativity. The conservative tradition withholds a traditional view on knowledge in terms of facts and basic skills that can, and ought to be, assessed as much as possible. As Apple (2005) argues, this is a tradition that has created the foundation of a market-oriented organisation of

education through the possibilities immanent in ranking and league tables (both prerequisites for school choice). This means that conservative ideas are 'kidnapped' by a performative culture focusing less on national and cultural values and canons than on measurable institutional and individual outcomes.

On the other hand, progressive ideas about schooling as the construction of cultural identities have also gained importance. These are increasingly directed to the evaluation of more 'qualitative' dimensions of individual development. This practice is based on a progressive tradition that focus on the 'whole' individual, for example through the previously discussed technology called SB. However, the 'terror's of performativity' (Ball 2003) appear to frame this blend of policy traditions in partly new ways, paving the way for economic, cultural, and linguistic reproduction.

I suggest that the current decentralised Swedish school system works to produce identities that tentatively can be seen as a collaboration between what Bernstein (2000 p. 68-70) terms the De-centred market identity and the De-centred therapeutic identity. As a producer of the De-centred market identity, schooling is oriented towards procedures of competition and the assessment of basic skills that lead to the distributions of rewards and punishments in the classroom (Bernstein 2000). Using the words of Bernstein (2000 p. 69) this pedagogy strives 'to produce an identity whose product has an exchange value in a market' and where focus is on 'the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic'. This pedagogy views 'knowledge as money' and hence works to construct an 'outwardly responsive identity rather than one driven by inner dedication' (Bernstein 2000 p. 69).

The current learner identity is simultaneously therapeutic in the sense that it is oriented towards self-government and 'progressive' ideals and capacities which are difficult to evaluate and which have usually been invisible to the student. However, in this new mode of performative pedagogy the assessment of the student's individual progression is not invisible. On the contrary, it is increasingly conducted using biographical registers and methods such as portfolios, individual development plans, transition documents, development dialogues, and parental cooperation, activities that explicitly aim at making the invisible visible. This pedagogy not only brings with it particular modes of integrated assessment and performance, but also the development of entrepreneurial and dynamic pedagogic identities. These are performative identities in the sense that they are constituted by teachers' appraisals and judgements. They are also performative in the sense that students are actually 'doing themselves with words'. Thus, to be a normal, good or included student is a role that must be performed in John Austin's terms. Such a role is 'not just constative and descriptive, but connotative and subjunctive': Being an ideal student is

*'not just locutionary, a matter of linguistic definition, but ... a matter of doing things with words. As a performative, it is not just role-taking but role-making' (Alexander 2009 p. 21).*

Performative role making, in this respect is both illocutionary and perlocutionary, i.e. a matter of producing effects (persuasion etc.) on teachers through speech acts. In order to render evaluation possible, students are encouraged to put themselves and their 'inner' capabilities on display – to act out or even perform in the classroom (cf. Beach & Dovemark 2007). In other words, students are encouraged to perform discursive categories, or 'floating signifiers', in order to market themselves as commodities and it is policies, schools and teachers that supply these discursive 'tools of self-fabrication'. Progressive ideas and ideals of inner dedication are thus transformed into an outwardly responsive identity. This feature of schooling is supported by EU policies that emphasises communicative competence in terms of 'self-expression'<sup>vii</sup> as a 'key competence that citizens require for *their* personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability' (European Union 2007, p. 1, emphasis added). The performative culture involves a continuous change of the ego, a fetishism of surface and a desire for perfection. Returning to the earlier comparison, one might say that if UDBs envision a certain goal or a point in time where time comes to a stop, the performative identity is forever uncompleted and under infinite reinvention: it is 'a utopia of *no end*' (Bauman 2005 p. 11).

I think that Bauman's (2007) recent work on consumerism might assist the understanding here. According to Bauman (2007 p. 57) it is the quality of *making* oneself a commodity that makes individuals 'bona fide members' of society today. In other words, this quality is a prerequisite for social inclusion:

*'[N]o one can become a subject without first turning into a commodity, and no one can keep his or her subjectness secure without perpetually resuscitating, resurrecting and replenishing the capacities expected and required of a sellable commodity' (Bauman 2007 p. 12).*

Put together Bernstein's two de-centred identities embody the two individual skills that Lyotard (1984) described as indispensable to efficient state performance: (a) skills that contribute to participation in the markets of world competition and (b) skills that contribute to the maintenance of internal cohesion and legitimation. Performative measures of inputs and outputs, like displays of quality, govern students, just as they govern organisations. The consumerist culture and its performative culture thus work in tandem on the level of identity formation.

The point I am trying to make here is that relations between education and social inclusion and exclusion ought to be studied from a perspective that acknowledge how identity formation is embedded in a wider cultural context. Our culture is foremost a society of consumers and it

*'...consists of offerings, not norms. As already noted by Pierre Bourdieu, culture lives by seduction, not normative regulation; PR, not policing; creating new needs/desires/wants, not coercion' (Bauman 2009 p. 157).*

As noted by Featherstone (2007) aestheticisation implies that the borders between art and everyday life are erased and that life itself is turned into a work of art. My usage of aestheticisation places education at its focal point. The erasure of borders between education and everyday life leads to the popular notion of life-long learning. Further studies on relations between education governance and social inclusion and exclusion need to acknowledge how this process is interwoven with performativity. For example, these processes imply that distinctions between subjects and 'fabrications' of subjects, between 'inner' and 'outer' dedication, and between 'the real' and 'unreal' identities are blurred. (One might also argue that Bauman's above distinction between PR and policing has become obsolete). Nevertheless, as I will show below such distinctions should be acknowledged in order to grasp the dynamics of identity formation in school today. I would like, now, to move on into a discussion that might shed some light upon this problematic.

### **Exploring identities and junk categories – the case of mobility**

One tentative result in the thesis refers to local differences between the kinds of identities that are produced in schools. In Lindgren (2010b), I work with this research question: How is it possible to understand local differences concerning schooling and outcomes of schooling – both in terms of statistical patterns and in terms of the identities produced – in a decentralised, individualised, and segregated school landscape? Using the geographer Edward W. Soja's trialectical framework I brought forward the preliminary hypothesis that the outcomes of schooling, measured in terms of mappable patterns of social inclusion and exclusion, might be inter-related to more abstract processes of identity formation and linguistic socialisation. For example, privileged Park was characterised by high transitions to further education (upper secondary as well as university) whereas life in de-privileged and stigmatised Garden was impaired by high levels of unemployment and social benefits. In addition, the identity produced in Park appeared to be in line with the ideal subject described in policies and by politicians and school actors. The identity in Garden, on the other hand, appeared to be more limited. This identity was not inside the norms for participation. Under these conditions, schooling harbours both

discursive and ideological elements, with the former referring to an ‘internal process’ in the form of social semiotics that constitutes identities in school – a matter of *knowledge*. The latter draws attention to ‘external effects’ in the form of the effective reproduction of individual positions in society – a matter of *equity* (cf. Purvis & Hunt 1993). From this perspective, aestheticisation, or the ‘linguistic turn’ in education, is an ideological turn that works to favour some students and to disadvantage others.

Lindgren and Lundahl (2010) is an attempt to start to explore one of the celebrated categories or capacities of the ideal policy subject: mobility or the capacity or readiness to be mobile. Mobility is seldom defined or scrutinised in educational research. (In that sense, this word is similar to other buzzwords like flexibility, independence, or responsibility). In itself, mobility does not open up any understanding. Drawing on Schön (1987 p. 13) one might see it as a ‘junk category’: an attached name to a ‘phenomena that elude conventional strategies of explanation’. Drawing on the recent literature of the newly created ‘mobilities paradigm’ (Ohnmacht, Maksim & Bergman 2009 p. 10) we argued that mobility is a fundamental, but under-researched feature of relations between educational governance and social inclusion and exclusion. Words like mobility are part of the aestheticisation of education, with consequences for young people’s self-understanding and actions. For example, young people are increasingly made aware of the ‘landscape of the soul’, i.e. how they are, how others are, and how they are suppose to be. This overheating of social semiotics has the potential to produce different subject positions, for example in terms of discrepancies between the own cognitive make up and the discursive ideal.

In Lindgren and Lundahl (2010) the ‘real’ mobilities of informants in Park, Garden and North (i.e. mappable patterns of transitions to further education, work, unemployment, social allowance) are related to structural factors and conventional understandings of mobility. The statistical data indicate that informants from Garden appeared to be ‘chained to place’ (Bauman 1998a) on a general level. Moreover, the small sample of interviewed informants from Garden did not talk about mobility as something of great symbolic value: they did not express mobile pre-dispositions. Nevertheless, we also found that the life histories we traced contained deviations and contradictions from traditional schematic typologies in terms of mobile middle class and immobile working class. For example, we found that informants from Garden were rather mobile in the sense that they had travelled (or been moved) around (as refugees), and mobile in the sense that they appeared to be able to handle mobility by being flexible and adjustable.

In the following, I will try to give an example of how ‘junk categories’ such as mobility can be analysed. Here I am interested in how socio-spatial differences, particularly regarding linguistic socialisation in and outside school, ‘interfere’ with young peoples’ identities, experiences, actions and positions in



terms of inclusion and exclusion. Once again, I attempt to link together aspects of the equity problematic and the knowledge problematic. In doing this I will introduce a framework that was originally sketched out by the amateur philosopher Donald Rumsfeld (!), former US minister of defence (quoted by Žižek 2004). According to Rumsfeld:

*'[t]here are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know.'* (Rumsfeld, March 2003 cited in Žižek 2004 p. 95)

Deploying Rumsfeld's framework on the aestheticisation on education, the above usage of 'we' ought to be replaced by students and 'things' ought to be replaced by 'categories' or 'capacities' (such as mobility).

One can imagine a group of students, most likely with middle class background, who are attending a high status school like Park. These students are aware of the discursive ideal and they also embody it in action. They know that mobility is a celebrated value today, they talk about mobility in terms of personal development and they use mobility in order to design their narrative identity. In other words, they have mobile pre-dispositions and mobility capital and they *are* mobile. Paraphrasing Rumsfeld: for them mobility is a *known known* and the question of social inclusion and exclusion is most likely reframed as a question about career choice.

One might imagine a second, similar group of students. These young people are also aware of the ideal, but they do not embody the ideal in action. Their position is one characterised by semi-integration in the symbolic structure of social life. For them mobility is a *known unknown*. Their problem is two-fold: (a) their habitus lacks the 'ability' and resources to be mobile and (b) their awareness of the ideal makes them even more sensitive to their own shortcomings in this respect. I suggest that one might find such young people in many different contexts, perhaps most likely from an aspiring working class background and attending schools like Park or North. For them transitions from compulsory school to upper secondary school might be difficult. Overall, they might feel insecure when they move in social space.

And then there is a third position. These are students for whom mobility is an *unknown unknown*. In the era of mobility this group is constituted as the 'losers' or the group at risk of social exclusion. These young people are unaware of the discursive ideals related to mobility. Neither in school nor outside school have they encountered ideas about mobility as something of an intrinsic or extrinsic value. In addition, due to social, economic, cultural, structural, and/or other conditions, they are simultaneously chained to place. Most likely, these



are young people that come from a segregated and deprived context like Garden.

As pointed out by Žižek (2004), Rumsfeld's framework lacks the completing fourth term. This term refers to the 'things that we don't know that we know' (Žižek 2004 p. 95). This is perhaps the most interesting of all positions. These are young people that do not have any explicit mobile pre-dispositions or mobility capital, but in their 'real' lives they have been, and still are, mobile and able to handle mobility. For them mobility is a form of tacit knowledge or an *unknown known*. Some of my informants occupy this subject position. As refugees they have been forced to handle mobilities and they have a rather pragmatic relation to mobility. However, they are to some extent unable to use, or profit from, their mobilities. They cannot use their experiences and capacities to design an inwardly self-encouraging biography nor an outwardly sellable version (to some extent this is due to the fact that their form of mobilities 'lack value' on the market). For young people in this position fast movement becomes a way to handle risk. Tentatively, I argue that UDBs are characterised by fast transitions between different educational stages. The risky struggle to secure a better social position gives no time or space for middle class moratoria or pauses. For these young people, life in the transition system is 'like skating over thin ice' – 'safety is their speed' (Larsen & Jacobsen 2009 p. 82).

As argued in Lindgren and Lundahl (2010) mobility is a concept that needs to be further investigated. Overall, my suggestion is that studies of aestheticisation as lived reality ought to include contradictions and oppositions related to these kind of junk categories: both their discursive and 'pre-discursive' endorsement, both their conscious and unconscious dimensions, both their discursive practice and ideological effects. Such studies need to consider students both from a dualistic perspective where the body is an object that is monitored by the subject (as in Giddens's subject) *and* from a perspective where the body is constituted through culture and education neither as subject nor object (as in Bourdieu's habitus). A tentative conclusion is that principles of differentiation and division within current schooling, and transitions from school to work, construct representation and standards of action that are very much related to the capacity to be the former kind of subject.

### Concluding remarks

In the executive summary of the EGSIE-project, the Swedish research team concluded that it was impossible to argue for a direct connection between education restructuring and increased social exclusion (Lindblad et al 2002). From my point of view, this is still a reasonable standpoint. However, one might argue that the measurable aspects of social exclusion in the wake of the last decades of policy change have continued to increase over time. As suggested in this thesis, processes of social inclusion and exclusion are under constant

change. The aestheticisation of education valorises certain types of cultural and social capital that, most likely, favour students of middle class background. Such students have greater opportunities to exploit the new possibilities to design their biographies for an increasingly segregated school market. In this sense, aestheticisation can be understood as an ideological feature of a supposedly inclusive and democratic education system.

The starting point for this thesis was a finished project. This means that I was able to draw on a well-grounded assemblage of theories, research questions, and results. Mostly this was an advantage, but to some extent, it also caused problems. For example, I could not choose the location of the fieldwork. The three case areas are located in different parts of Sweden and far away from my working place in Umeå. My geographical, social, and economic situation has limited the opportunities to conduct extensive fieldwork in these settings. Moreover, the follow-up design prevented me from generating data of actual processes of schooling. Consequently, there is one segment of data that is entirely missing: evidence of classroom processes and their role in the production of social inclusion and exclusion. Instead, I have had to rely on survey data, interviews with former students, politicians, principals and teachers and longitudinal statistics. I am fully aware that, together and separately, these techniques have their limitations. For example, experiences of social life (including schooling) are 'different from words and symbols about those experiences' (Altheide & Johnson 1994 p. 492). Although students have given interesting accounts, it became obvious that the biographical perspective has its limitation. My informants were not educational researchers and they have not experienced their lives as students using lenses offered by educational theory. Thus, data on classroom practices would have complemented the analysis in many fruitful ways.

Finally, there was a problem concerning the possibility of contextualising the three case-study areas. The original project used pseudonyms in order to preserve the anonymity of respondents and places. I was therefore obliged to use the same strategy. Although there are scientific reasons for this, both epistemological and ethical, I have been restricted when it comes to the opportunities to provide in-depth descriptions and analysis of the three locations and schools. The argument that space and place is important in educational policy research is, therefore, in tension with the notion of anonymity (cf. Gulson 2005). One might also argue that the choice of such different social locations for the study creates schematic distinctions between different groups of students. If other settings had been chosen, the outcomes might have been different. As argued in Lindgren (2010b) more research is merited in other differentiated contexts, social groups and educational actors.

One final suggestion is that relations between education governance and social inclusion/exclusion need to be studied in tandem. As spatial, historical

and social phenomena, they ought to be studied both as problems of equity and knowledge, and with different methods and with longitudinal research designs. These processes need to be understood as inter-disciplinary problematics that includes the entangled social production of: (a) spatially as in an imagination dealing with both the spatial politics of identities and localities, (b) historically as an issue of time in both the society and in the reflexivity of individuals, and (c) socially as the being-and-becoming-in-the-world. An approach combining ethnographical studies (observations) of classroom practices, interviews with students, analysis of school documentation, longitudinal statistics, and follow up interviews would shed further light on these complex relations.

### Final notes on writing and presentations

To a certain extent, writing this thesis was an act of seduction. I have transformed a rather chaotic process into a linear text that tells a story about my research: my designs, strategies, purpose, and results. Just like a bio-graphy, bringing order, structure, and continuity to a human life, this text is a construction. Relations between education governance and social inclusion/exclusion are not 'objects' in the world designed for scientific research: they must be created actively through language. In the same way identities, spaces and mobilities are cultural artefacts that must be made visible through representation (cf. Van Maanen 1988). In a sense all research, not only that of social science, is *suspended* in language. To this extent, the Danish physicist and Nobel prize-winner Niels Bohr once argued that

*[i]n physics we deal with states of affairs much simpler than those of psychology and yet we again and again learn that our task is not to investigate the essence of things – we do not at all know what this would mean – but to develop those concepts that allow us to speak with each other about the events of nature in a fruitful manner' (Bohr quoted in Favrholt 1994 p. 83).*

This approach to scientific work resembles the one I sketched out above, in my introduction: at the most basic level the point of my work was not to find objective truth, but rather to 'keep the conversation going' (Rorty 1980 p. 377). From this point of view writing is a crucial aspect of research that must also be subject to critical reflection. Although I have tried not to be normative in my writing, I am aware that my text is culturally and politically mediated. Narrative and rhetorical conventions have worked to structure my representations in particular ways. Above all, I accept that my writing has been affected by my dissatisfaction with the contemporary state of affairs that exists between education and social inequalities.

As a doctoral student, I became more and more reconciled with the words of David Hamilton who once claimed that: 'I don't do research, I write papers' (2009, seminar). This might appear as a rather peculiar attitude. However, also a field working ethnographer like Van Maanen (1988 p. 4) has argued that '[w]riting an ethnography is office-work or deskwork, not fieldwork'. Although dependence on words has always been an aspect of research, the suspension of researchers in language has been shaped by contemporaneous cultures of publishing and the increased demand that researchers write, in English, for international journals; i.e. instead of monographs, reports, and books. I would like to conclude this thesis by discussing how I faced up to writing and presentation under these conditions.

There are many reasons why researchers choose not to write books or reports (cf. Holmquist & Sundin 2009). For example, writing for international journals provides the possibility of reaching an international audience. For me this was important since, from the outset, my study was firmly established within an existing international debate. Given the scope of this debate, I needed to structure my work around smaller, manageable units. The successful reviewing of the resultant articles was a warrant of their quality. In addition, publication in international journals provides researchers with personal merit and, to some extent, it also increase the status of their home departments.

As a doctoral student I found it difficult to understand and orient myself to the culture of international publishing. I have devoted much time to finding suitable journals and to adjust papers to the cultures and conventions of different journals. Being dependent on editors and referees creates a sense of insecurity. Awaiting responses and trying to interpret and deal with reviewer comments was demanding and frustrating, but also interesting and enjoyable. Overall, I found it hard to contextualise and explain the complexities of data and theory in the short form typically required by journal editors. At times it was difficult to see whether re-writing was done in order to satisfy the requirements of journals (whatever they were), to satisfy my own interests (whatever they were at the time) or to produce good science (whatever that is).

As pointed out by Hamilton (2009, seminar), writing for publication places the researcher in the position of a seller who offers a commodity (the paper) in a market place. Scientific journals tend to function in accordance with other commercial media. Editors are therefore looking for papers that attract readers on grounds other than purely 'academic' (e.g. that they are both scientific and newsworthy). This transformation of scientific production has obviously changed research and the outcomes of research. In this sense, my research process was also *governed* by the culture of international publishing. During the early stages of the research – during literature studies and data production – I looked for problematics that were interesting and illuminating, but that also seemed convertible into scientific articles. The research process was thus partly

subsumed under a kind of dramaturgic or epic coercion, which of course had an influence on the finalised texts. I am fully aware of the pitfalls of this strategy: the risk of overstating the spectacular, dramatic or strange. I am also aware that the problematics highlighted in the articles might have marginalised or obscured topics or problems that my informants may have held as important features of their lives (cf. Maguire, Ball & Macrae 2001).

At the time of writing, there is a discussion at my home department on whether doctoral students' salaries ought to be calibrated against the pace of writing and publishing articles. Against this background, the turn to international journal publishing in educational research can be seen as an adaption to the same performative culture governing other educational institutions. Awareness of my own *location* in education has pervaded the writing of this thesis. At the same time, I have found inspiration in the work of writers dedicated to transcending such cultural limitations. Using the words of Bauman (2000 p. 206): 'To create (and also to discover) always means breaking a rule...'

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<sup>vii</sup> According to 'Dictionary.com' self-expression refers to the '[e]xpression of one's own personality, feelings, or ideas, as through speech'.



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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. Overview of data

Data	Article	North	Park	Garden
Original EGSIE-youth survey 2000 (Lindgren 2003)		Three areas & three schools (N = 177)	One area & two schools (N = 148)	One area & one school (N = 88)
	Article 3	-	One area & one school (N = 68)	One area & one school (N = 88)
	Article 4	One area & one school (N = 53)	-“-	-“-
Statistics Sweden (2003 & 2006)		One area & one school (N = 53 & 51)	One area & one school (N = 95 & 94)	One area & one school (N = 101 & 97)
	Article 3	-	-“-	-“-
	Article 4	One area & one school (N = 53 & 51)	-“-	-“-

*Table 1. Questionnaire data and longitudinal data in different articles.*

Informants	Biographical notes	Contributes in Article 2	Contributes in Article 3	Contributes in Article 4
<b>North</b>				
Fredrik	Lives in the North, works in the local industry. Mother Swedish, working class. Father Swedish, working class	no	yes	yes
Anna	Lives in the North,	no	yes	key

	works in the service sector. Mother Swedish, working class. Father Swedish, working class			informant
Cecilia	Lives in North city 200 km from the North, works in the service sector. Mother Swedish, working class. Father Swedish, working class	no	yes	yes
Anders	Lives in smaller city 70 km from the North. Caretaker. Mother Swedish, working class. Father Swedish, working class	no	yes	yes
<b>Park</b>				
Peter	Lives in South city. Engaged on a special project. Mother Swedish, middle class. Father Swedish, entrepreneur	no	yes	key informant
Sara	Lives in South city. University student. Mother Swedish, middleclass, Father immigrant, education and occupational status unknown	no	yes	yes
Tomas	Lives in Park. Seasonal employment (verger). Mother Swedish, middleclass, Father Swedish middle class	no	yes	key informant
<b>Garden</b>				
Dijedon	Lives with parents and siblings in Garden. Refugee from the Balkans, university degree in media, engagement in a special project. Mother refugee, working class, work programme for disabled.	key informant	yes	key informant

	Father, refugee, working class, work programme for disabled			
Djamel	Lives in South city. Refugee, entrepreneur. Mother refugee, working class, house work. Father refugee, engineer (works as shop assistant)	key informant	yes	key informant
Nadia	Lives in South city. Refugee from the Balkans, university student. Mother refugee, middle class. Father refugee, middle class	key informant	yes	yes
Hana	Lives with parents and siblings in Garden. Refugee, works as shop assistant. Mother refugee, working class. Father refugee, working class.	no	yes	yes

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*Table 2. Informants and their contribution in different articles.*

## Appendix 2. Interview manual

### Intervjumanual

Förklara vad intervjun kommer att handla om. Att det är viktigt att få kunskap om hur det är att växa upp och gå i skola i olika miljöer etc.

Jag kommer inte att använda ditt namn när jag använder det du säger. Det gäller också namnen på andra personer eller platser du nämner: föräldrar, lärare och kompisar. En del frågor är personliga. Du behöver inte svara på frågor om du inte vill. Jag vill veta hur du ser på saker och ting, jag vill lyssna till dina erfarenheter – det finns inget rätt eller fel, svara så 'ärligt' du kan!

### Slå på voicerecorderen!

### Jag tänkte att vi skulle börja prata lite om din uppväxt!

Var är du född?

Var har du vuxit upp?

(Vilket språk kan du bäst? I vilka situationer pratar du vilka språk?)

Har du vuxit upp med bägge dina föräldrar? Har dina föräldrar arbetat? Med vad? Var de arbetslösa under någon period när du växte upp? Arbetar de idag?

Var är de födda?

Vet du vad de har för utbildning?

Hur skulle du beskriva dina föräldrar? Vad gillar de att göra tex.? Intressen?

Vad brukade ni göra tillsammans i familjen när du var barn? Semester? Lekte och läste de mycket för dig t.ex.?

Vad är det viktigaste du lärt dig av dina föräldrar när det gäller hur man ska vara som människa?

Hur skulle du beskriva det bostadsområdet/samhället där du växte upp?

Vad gjorde du och dina kompisar? Var lekte ni? Vad gjorde ni?

Hur hade du det med kompisar? (Berätta hur det var och vad du tror att det berodde på?)

Hur var din familj om du jämför den med dina kompisars familjer?

Tycker du att ni hade pengar så att du kunde köpa och göra saker som dina kompisar kunde?

Vad tror påverkade dig mest under din uppväxt? På vilket sätt?

Gick du på förskola eller? Hur var det?

**Nu tänkte jag att vi skulle prata om hur det var att börja skolan. Vi pratar först om grundskolan – 1:a klass till 6:an.**

Hur var det att börja skolan?

Vad tyckte du om skolan i början? Vad var det bästa/sämsta med skolan?

Hur var du som elev?

Hur vet du det? (Hur vet man hur man är som elev?)

När/hur förstod du att du var (medelbra/duktig/dålig/blyg/bråkig etc.) i skolan?

Kan du berätta om någon speciell situation eller händelse där du förstod detta?

Hur uppfattade du att man skulle vara i skolan för att vara bra? (Beskriv en duktig elev?)

Skilde detta sig mellan olika ämnen i skolan? Mellan t.ex. matten och gympan?

Tycker du att dina föräldrar påverkade ditt skolarbete? Fick du hjälp av dem, med vad?

Tycker du att det var skillnad mellan ditt hem och skolan när det gäller hur man skulle uppföra sig? På vilket sätt?

Fick du vara med och påverka vad som hände i skolan? Hur?

Kände du dig innanför eller utanför i skolan – kände du att du passade in? (Hade du lätt att få kompisar?)

Var det någon som var utanför i din klass? Beskriv den personen? Varför hamnade den utanför? Hur gick det för den personen i skolan?

Vad gjorde du på fritiden under denna tid?

**Nu tänkte jag att vi skulle prata om tiden från 7:an till 9:an.**

Fick du börja på en ny skola då?

Hur var det att börja 7:an? Var det någon skillnad att gå i 7:an jämfört med 6:an? På vilket sätt?

Vad tyckte du om skolan då?

Hur var du som elev då?

Vad tror du att andra (lärare och elever) tyckte om dig som elev? Hur beskrev lärare dig vid t.ex. utvecklingssamtal?

Hur jobbade ni i skolan? Fick ni elever ta mycket eget ansvar?

Var det mycket projekt- och grupparbeten eller höll läraren i undervisningen och ställde frågor och ni svarade? Var läraren sträng eller mer som en kompis?

Tycker du att det var tydligt för dig vad som förväntades av dig?

Fick du vara med och påverka vad som hände i skolan? Hur?

Deltog du i någon form av stödundervisning? Hur var det? Var det utvecklande? Tycker du att det påverkade dig på något sätt?

Hur såg lärare på dem som deltog i stödundervisning? (Hur såg dina kompisar på dem som gick i stödundervisning? Hur såg du på dem som deltog i stödundervisning?)

Hur gick det för dig i skolan 7:an till 9:an? Betyg? Var du stressad över betygen och så? Vad mäter betygen?

Fick du hjälp med skolarbetet av dina föräldrar?

Tycker du att det var skillnad mellan ditt hem och skolan när det gäller hur man skulle uppföra sig? På vilket sätt?

Hur uppfattade du att man skulle vara i högstadiet för att lyckas i skolan?

Vad är det som gör att vissa lyckas i skolan och andra inte?

Kan du beskriva lärarnas ideal-elev bland dina klasskompisar? Hur blir man sådan?

Var det viktigare att vara populär bland kompisar eller lärare?

Vilka var populärast bland andra klasskompisar – hur var de?

Hur skulle du beskriva att de flesta ungdomar ville var i den åldern? Kan du beskriva någon i din klass som var populär bland andra i klassen?

Vilka var utanför – hur var de? Kan du beskriva någon som var utanför i din klass? Varför hamnade den personen utanför? Hur gick det för den personen i skolan och efter skolan?

Kände du dig innanför eller utanför då? Hur då, berätta på vilket sätt!

Hade du många kompisar då? Kan du beskriva ditt kompisgäng? Vad gjorde ni t.ex.?

Vilken gymnasieutbildning ville du gå? Pratade du med SYO? Påverkade SYO dig i någon riktning?

Vilka framtidsplaner hade du när du gick i 9:an? Hur tänkte du? Varifrån fick du dessa idéer? Var du orolig? Pratade du med någon om din framtid?

## **Gymnasiet**

Gick du på gymnasiet? Vilken gymnasieutbildning gick du och var?

Var det ditt första val? (Hur kändes det att inte komma in på 1:a valet?/ Hur kändes det att komma in på 1:a valet?)

Hur var det att börja gymnasiet?

Vad tyckte du om den utbildningen?

Hur jobbade ni i skolan? Fick ni elever ta mycket eget ansvar?

Var det mycket projekt- och grupparbeten eller höll läraren i undervisningen och ställde frågor och ni svarade? Var läraren sträng eller mer som en kompis?

Hur skulle du beskriva lärarna?



Tycker du att det var tydligt för dig vad som förväntades av dig?  
Hur var du som elev då? Hur visste du det?  
Var det någon skillnad att gå i gymnasiet jämfört med 9:an? På vilket sätt?  
Fick du vara med och påverka vad som hände i skolan? Hur?  
Hur gick det för dig i gymnasiet? Betyg? Var du stressad över detta?  
Hur skulle man vara för att lyckas i gymnasiet?  
Kände du dig innanför eller utanför på gymnasiet? Hur då, berätta på vilket sätt!  
Hade din inställning till skolan ändrats på något sätt sedan grundskolan? Hur då, berätta?  
(Var det några särskilda erfarenheter som fått dig att ändra uppfattning?)  
Vilka framtidsplaner hade du då? Hur tänkte du? Oroade du dig inför framtiden?  
Hade du planer på vidare studier eller på något särskilt yrke? Varifrån fick du dessa idéer?  
Dina framtidsplaner ändrades alltså/alltså inte under gymnasiet? Hur/varför?  
Förändrades du under gymnasiet? Hur/Varför?  
Vad gjorde du på fritiden under denna period?

### **Efter gymnasiet och nutid**

Vad gjorde du efter gymnasiet?  
Var bodde du? Vad har du gjort?  
Vad tycker du om skolan såhär i efterhand?  
Vad tror du är det viktigaste syftet med skolan? Lyckas skolan med det?  
Kan vem som helst lyckas i skolan bara man jobbar hårt? Hur/varför inte?  
Vad innebär det att lyckas i livet? (Beskriv en människa som lyckats i livet!)  
Tycker du att det är viktigt att studera för att lyckas i livet? Hur/varför inte?  
Hur uppfattar du att man ska vara för att passa in i och vara delaktig i dagens samhälle? Lokalt?  
Känner du att du passar in i samhället?  
Vilka är utanför samhället, ge exempel? (Lokalt)  
Vad är det som gör att människor hamnar utanför samhället? Styr man själv över detta?  
Kan alla lyckas om de vill? Varför inte?  
Är det viktigt att ha arbete? Varför/varför inte?  
Hur ska man vara för att lyckas i arbetslivet?

Vad har du för framtidsplaner – drömmar? Vilka hinder ser du?

Nu tror jag att vi börjar bli färdiga...

Hur var det att bli intervjuad?

Är det något viktigt som vi glömt?

Tack så mycket för att du tog dig tid att prata med mig!

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